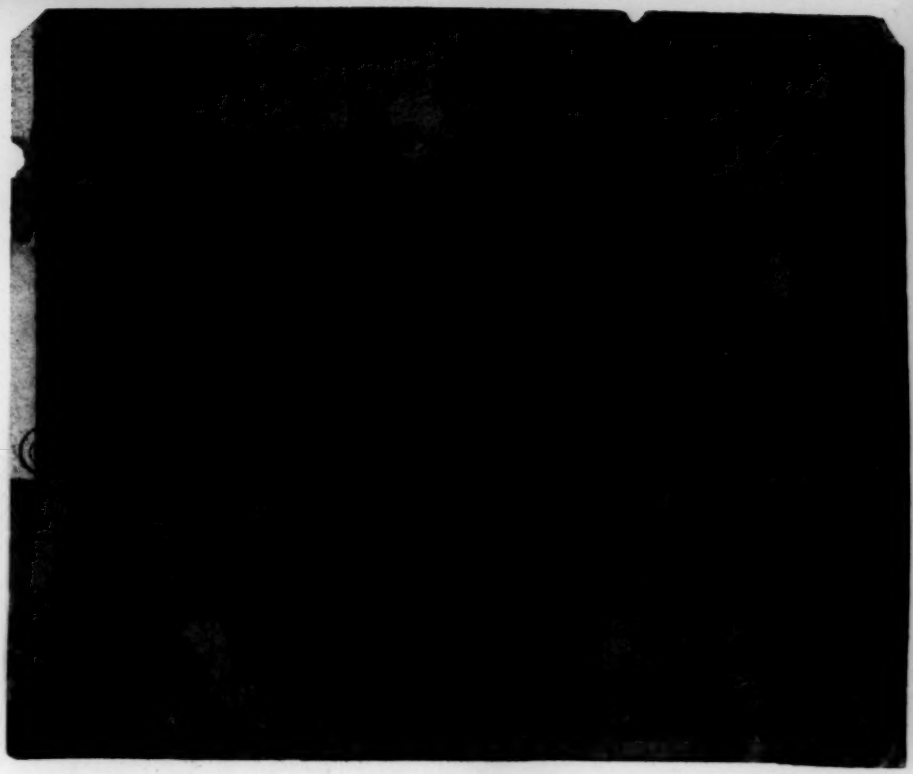

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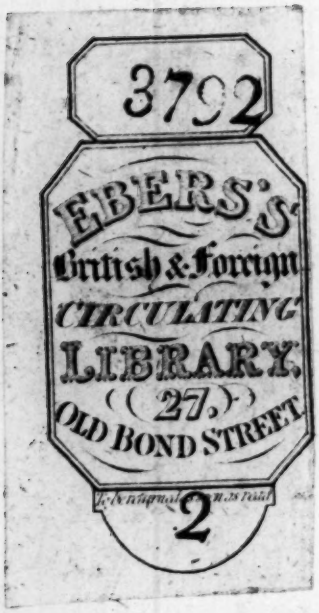
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THE

RIVAL MOTHERS.

VOL. II.

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THE RIVAL MOTHERS, OR *CALUMNY.*

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

MADAME DE GENLIS.

Virtue and Patience have at length unravell'd
The knots which Fortune tied.

DRYDEN.

Depuis que je ſuis né, j'ai vu la calomnie
Exhaler les venins de ſa bouche impunie.

VOLTAIRE's *Tancrède.*

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
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1800.

THE

RIVAL MOTHERS.

LETTER I.

From MONSIEUR D'ORGEVAL *to the* CHEVALIER DE CELTAS.

Dijon, June 18.

DENISE and myſelf conjure you, my dear Chevalier, to come here without delay; you cannot give us a greater proof of your friendſhip. Some abominable tricks have been played us. Madame de Fonville, dazzled by the oſtentation of the financier du Reſnel, has behaved towards us in the moſt ſhocking manner. She it is who has made the moſt clamour; and now ſhe lays the whole on my wife and

me. I am waiting for you, in order to have an explanation with my brother, as well as with du Reſnel. This becomes abſolutely neceſſary. My brother is *ſatisfied*; this is all that I wiſh. I have, beſides, a very clear conſcience; it was not I who ſaid all that has been reported; at bottom I was much vexed at it, you know; but I could not impoſe ſilence on a whole town. I have not, like du Reſnel, two hundred thouſand livres a year to ſtop the mouths of the tattlers.

I am incenſed againſt Madame de Fonville; thoſe deviliſh prudes are capable of every thing; one ſhould never truſt them. This woman has ſet her cap at du Reſnel with a degree of indecency that has ſhocked every body. She is madly in love with him; ſhe muſt be very *blind* if ſhe expects to inflame a man who can ſee nothing in the whole world but Pauline. Yet du Reſnel is very gallant with her. I believe he has *had her in a corner*. You have no idea

idea of the inſolent luxury that du Reſnel diſplays here; I aſſure you that he is a very dark and very dangerous man. He has reconciled old Vordac with my brother; and I am told for certain that the Baron and Baroneſs are coming, that they will paſs a month at Dijon, and will take up their abode at du Reſnel's. You will perceive the conſequences of this, and all the tricks that may ſtill be played us; the more as Vordac is the moſt indiſcreet prater that I ever knew. If you were here, we would face every thing; come then, my friend; I beg you will come inſtantly. Du Reſnel conducts himſelf as a politician with me; and as I am as cunning as he, I act in the ſame manner; he invites us pretty often to ſupper; he is very attentive to my wife; but I have ſufficient penetration to perceive that he no longer troubles himſelf about her, and that he is grown very cool towards us. This is the

ſmalleſt of my cares; yet I muſt make up my mind in this conjuncture. I ſee but two ways to act; the one, to break the ice and ſend the financier du Reſnel about his buſineſs; the other, to have an amicable explanation: I wait for you in order to come to a deciſion.

Adieu, my dear fellow, do not loſe time; arrive with ſpeed; this is eſſential to yourſelf, for I aſſure you that you are alſo very *deep in the mire.*

LETTER II.

The CHEVALIER'S *Anſwer.*

Autun, June 22.

I SHALL certainly ſet out to-morrow ſe'nnight. Your conduct has been perfectly proper. Neither you nor I have the ſmalleſt thing to reproach ourſelves with;

with; this is always the main point. All the province laughed at a romantic adventure which greatly reſembled a fable. We were grieved at it, and we publicly defended the Marchioneſs with all our might; theſe are inconteſtable facts. As for du Reſnel, he is a knave and a coxcomb. All that you ſee him do is only to perſuade the public that it is he who is *the father of the child*, and not the Duke de Roſmond. And indeed many people, at preſent, do him the honour to entertain this idea. This is all that his ſtay at Dijon has produced. However, let us avoid altercation; let us obſerve; let us laugh between ourſelves; but let us make no buſtle. If your brother and ſiſter-in-law were wholly un-concerned in all this, we might amuſe ourſelves a moment in ridiculing the inſolent financier; but any noiſe would caſt an additional ſlur on the Marchioneſs. Conduct yourſelf, however, with the ſame penetration and ſhrewdneſs; diſſemble with du Reſnel. When I

come to Dijon, I will talk to him as well as to your brother; but as if it was *without your knowledge.* I will make him ſenſible how much it concerns their conſideration that, in public, you ſhould appear on the beſt terms; I will ſay of you a thouſand things which I could not, without impropriety, ſay in your preſence. Every thing ſhall be ſettled to your ſatisfaction; you muſt ſtill ſeem to know nothing of the matter, and, in this manner, you will avoid the trouble and tireſomeneſs of explanations.

Adieu, my dear fellow; believe that I have the moſt lively impatience to be with you and the amiable Deniſe.

LETTER III.

From the MARCHIONESS D'ERNEVILLE *to the* BARONESS DE VORDAC.

July 6.

SINCE your journey is delayed, my dear friend, I muſt needs write to you again. Although we lead a very agreeable kind of life, I cannot help thinking it very ſtrange not to ſee either flowers or verdure in the month of July. This is the firſt ſummer that I have paſſed in a town; and if I was not here with two perſons who are dear to me, I ſhould pine to death.

Monſieur du Reſnel is ſtill the life and ſoul of Dijon; he is ſo amiable when he chooſes to take the trouble of pleaſing, that now he is known, I aſſure you, whatever he may ſay, he is courted only for his own ſake. You are well aware, my

dear friend, that I can appreciate all that he has done for me. He would not receive my thanks; I have expreſſed none; but I know how to feel, and the moſt lively gratitude attaches me to him for life. He has a ſoul by no means of the common ſtamp; and what activity, what delicacy!... In ſhort, he has ſucceeded in reconciling the world with me; but I own to you that nothing will ever reconcile me with the world. Their injuſtice will make me do neither a culpable nor a fooliſh thing; I ſhall always reſpect every ſort of decorum; and at the ſame time I feel that I ſhall never attach the ſmalleſt value to praiſe or cenſure. Vanity appears to me but a folly, and fame but a ſmoke; I blame not the world for judging from appearances and artful falſehoods; nothing is more natural; but reputation depends too much on chance for it to be real. We ought to conduct ourſelves as if we ſet a great value on it; decency and virtue preſcribe this to us;

us; but we ſhould live for God and for ourſelves, and have a ſovereign contempt for public opinion, that is to ſay, at the bottom of our heart; for I admit that we ought never to brave it. In ſhort, my friend, I have a *grudge* that will laſt, becauſe it is without violence and without ill humour. I am not angry; I am diſguſted; I have no miſanthropy; I ſee objects ſuch as they are, and I am chilled. I believe that we do not recover from this ſituation, and I am not twenty!.... Great God, in what ideal world I have lived till this fatal epoch!..... What dream of my imagination! Ah! how delightful it was!..... A very real misfortune is, that theſe chimerical ideas had exalted all my ſentiments. I muſt now new-model my character, moderate my affections, repreſs my confidence, and aſſume another manner of loving!... Yet I have ſtill the ſame heart. What I ſhall do with it in future? It can no longer be deceived!..... Forgive me

theſe melancholy complaints; I dare not indulge in them but with you.

You aſk me for particulars reſpecting my ſiſter-in-law; I have nothing ſatisfactory to tell you of her. At the time when the clamour againſt me was univerſal, ſhe ſeemed to triumph; now ſhe has viſibly given herſelf up to peeviſhneſs. I relied on her friendſhip; ſhe had not even any good will for me. What do I ſay? She hated me! People have pretended to explain this, by ſaying that her averſion is owing to the elegance of Erneville and the ſplendour of my family!.... Juſt heaven! if it be true that follies ſo ſtupid and ſo abſurd are common, how can any one remain willingly in ſociety?

The Chevalier de Celtas has been here for ſome days; he went immediately to have a private interview with Monſieur du Reſnel, in order to come to *an explanation* with him reſpecting Monſieur and Madame d'Orgeval's conduct in regard to me, which he

he blames freely; adding, that it muſt be entirely imputed to the perverſeneſs and the ſhallow underſtanding of Monſieur d'Orgeval. This was accompanied by a long apology of his own conduct. Monſieur du Reſnel anſwered, that he did not enter at all into family diſputes; that indeed his attachment to us inſpired him with the moſt profound contempt for our enviers; but that he was perfectly ſatisfied, becauſe all reſpectable people were of his opinion. The Chevalier de Celtas called on my mother, and told her the ſame things. My mother received him in her uſual polite and mild manner, but was rather cool. However, as we ſee that they are at laſt aſhamed of their behaviour, we ſhall no longer ſeem to remember it. Monſieur du Reſnel will reſume his accuſtomed graceful affability with my ſiſter-in-law; he had a droll way of *ſetting her on the ſtool of repentance*, as he termed it. You know that there are people who are no longer

any thing in company, as ſoon as one ceaſes to pay attention to them, and to ſhew them to advantage. Madame d'Orgeval is of this number; Monſieur du Reſnel was inceſſantly inviting her to dinner and ſupper; he was perfectly eaſy and polite, but he let fall to the ground all that ſhe ſaid; he repeated nothing, he took up nothing; and poor Deniſe producing by herſelf no ſtriking effect, was neither praiſed nor remarked, which threw her into a depreſſion of ſpirits, and gave her a peeviſhneſs which ſhe could neither conquer nor conceal. She had reſolved to maintain that Monſieur du Reſnel's ſuppers were horribly tireſome; and in order to prove it, ſhe affected abſence there, and put on every demonſtration of the moſt profound *ennui*. Accordingly, when Monſieur du Reſnel perceived her, retired to a corner, careleſsly ſtretched out in an arm-chair, and yawning with all her might, he ſaid to me pleaſantly: "*Do you ſee Madame d'Orgeval caballing againſt me?*"

Adieu, my dear and affectionate friend; how happy ſhall I be to ſee you again, and to chat freely with you!—You will love my charming Léocadie, you will love her as much as Maurice, for I make no difference between theſe two dear little creatures.

LETTER IV.

From the VISCOUNT DE ST. MÉRAN *to* MONSIEUR DU RESNEL.

Paris, September 19.

WITHIN theſe laſt three weeks I have ſeen, in our houſehold, ſo many dark plots, deceptions, and intrigues, that I really long to ſpeak to *an honeſt man*. It is already a great point gained to know merely where to find him; therefore to have him for a friend muſt conſole me for every thing.

I will

I will not trouble you with the detail of our quarrels; for the fineſſe of people of the faſhionable world renders ſtratagems ſo complicated and ſo embroiled, their blackeſt arts of malice are frequently ſo ſubtle, ſo ſhrewd, they depend on preparations ſo multiplied and ſo artful, that it would be neceſſary to write volumes to make you ſenſible of all the conſequences of them. In the country, people are clowniſhly falſe or envious; but here, what refinement! a perſon never inveighs againſt his enemy; he never makes a buſtle; he appears always calm, and even careleſs; but he watches the opportunity of placing a word that may ſtrike home; and this word is ſaid ſo negligently, that a long habit is neceſſary to know the intention of it. Well do people here, know how to lay a ſnare! Well do they know how to take advantage of an improper ſtep! Well do they know, above all, how to nouriſh and ſtrengthen unfavourable prepoſſeſſions againſt their rivals!....

Princes, as long as they love, think that their attachment raiſes up to them him who

who is the object of it; but as ſoon as the attachment ceaſes, the object that no longer inſpires it, loſes in their eyes every ſort of conſideration; he then appears to them worthy neither of attention nor of reſpect.

Princes have a certain ſenſe of ſhame, very fatal to courtiers; they cannot endure the preſence of thoſe who have loſt their favour. The prince who, without any embarraſſment, ſhould live with a diſgraced favourite, would certainly have very coarſe feelings, or elſe a very great character.

Thoſe who have not lived with princes, imagine that they are never capable of the little attentions of friendſhip, and that they always introduce into the moſt intimate intercourſe a ſort of haughtineſs, which makes a perſon feel the ſuperiority of rank. This idea is very falſe. Princes are extremely familiar with their intimate friends; and if they be ignorant and indolent, they have an aſſiduity that is not to be found in our equals. A friend to the greater part of them is a counſellor, a guide;

guide; they want him every moment; the pleaſure of ſpeaking of themſelves makes them find in confidence, an allurement that does not exiſt among equals; for, in this latter intercourſe, every one ſpeaks of himſelf in his turn. Let us add a truth; it is that princes too are capable of very amiable attentions and aſſiduities, as long as they love; and they all have the delicacy of never ſaying any thing that can remind their intimate friend of the diſtance of rank; they eſtabliſh, in this reſpect, by their manner and by the little details of their conduct, a perfect equality. All this is charming as long as their friendſhip laſts; but if you are blackened to their eyes, if another gets poſſeſſion of their confidence, all this illuſion quickly vaniſhes; the friend diſappears all at once; you will no longer find any thing but the prince, who commonly condemns you without hearing you, without wiſhing to liſten to you, refuſing you, imperiouſly, every

every ſort of explanation. In general, princes in friendſhip are like lovers; they love their friend till another pleaſes them more; a new friendſhip almoſt always leads to the rupture of the old one; then there remains of them only letters and portraits. What I ſay of princes I alſo ſay of prime miniſters, and of all perſons long raiſed to eminent dignities, poſſeſſing at once great credit and a great fortune. How difficult it is to be in ſuch places, and to behave in them like Henry IV. and Sully!

Great fortune and elevated rank often deprive thoſe who poſſeſs them of the delight of being loved. At firſt we attach ourſelves to them through intereſt or vanity; and this view alone occupying the mind, prevents us from ſtudying to learn what engaging qualifications princes poſſeſs. As we wiſh to pleaſe them, to ſeduce and lead them, we are more intent on diſcovering their foibles than their good qualities. We trouble ourſelves very

very little about finding them amiable; and this alone frequently prevents us from doing them that juſtice when they deſerve it. Such a prince who never had a friend, would have had ſome ſincere ones, had he not been a prince. If ſo many princes are ungrateful, and in general little capable of friendſhip, it is that, if they have read or looked round them ever ſo little, they eaſily acquire the idea that we love them not for their own ſake; thence they ſeek only for agreeable connexions, deſpairing to find friends.

I have indulged too much in my reflections to ſend you to-day a great deal of news. I will only tell you that Poligni, the confidant of the Duke de Roſmond's love for Dercy's ward, has ſeduced this little girl; he was admitted to the guardian's; he did not ſee the young girl, who was always kept ſhut up in her room; but, going to the houſe, he found means to obtain a private appointment; and inſtead of acquitting himſelf of the commiſſions

of

of his friend, he ſpoke for himſelf. The intrigue ended by an elopement; and Poligni, in order to ſecure his conqueſt from the purſuit of the guardian, has procured an engagement for her at the opera-houſe. You know that this is a *ſacred* aſylum for plebeian girls who run away from their relations, and that they are even ſkreened from paternal authority, whatever may be their youth. Of all our ſcandalous cuſtoms, this is not the leaſt revolting. In ſhort, poor Dercy's niece is at preſent a dancer in the choruſes of the opera. As ſhe never knew how to dance, ſhe contents herſelf with *marching*, and diſplaying a very blooming and very ſhowy perſon, which the public greatly applaud. It was Poligni who told me all this. I aſked him how the Duke de Roſmond had reliſhed his proceeding? "He is piqued "at it," anſwered he, "but at leaſt he "cannot refuſe me his eſteem; for to "ſupplant him, and deceive Dercy's vi-

"gilance,

" gilance, is, moſt aſſuredly, a maſterly " ſtroke." I have foretold Poligini one thing; it is, that the Duke, even in turning this adventure into pleaſantry, would preſerve a bitter reſentment for it, and would be revenged ſooner or later. A ſupplanted coxcomb never forgives. I imagine that you are now returned to Gilly, and that your friends are at Erneville. May peace and happineſs take up their abode in the places that you inhabit! Always write to me with detail about the charming Pauline; a man can neither forget her, when he has had an opportunity of ſeeing and hearing her, nor remember her with indifference. I own to you, my friend, that ſuch a neighbourhood appears to me dangerous; you are poſſeſſed of feeling, and are ſtill young: take care of yourſelf; this encouraging name of *friendſhip* may deceive virtue, and I know that yours would not pardon itſelf ſuch a miſtake. When we have a heart perfectly

free,

free, are endowed with great ſenſibility, and are ſtill in the age of the paſſions, do you think that it is poſſible to live in the greateſt intimacy with ſuch a woman as Pauline, and confine ourſelves to mere friendſhip? Reflect on this queſtion, and anſwer it with that ſincerity which characteriſes you. I have the greateſt deſire to know your ideas on this ſubject; for the more I think of it, the more *your letters* alarm me. You will not conſider this queſtion as improper, I hope, or ſuſpect me of an impertinent curioſity; on the contrary, I truſt that you will do juſtice to the ſentiment with which I am animated.

Adieu, my friend.—I ſend you a parcel of new pamphlets; a novel of Dorat, where you will find nothing but wit and memory, and the ſtyle of which is both incorrect, and that of a manneriſt; an academical panegyric of Thomas, which his partiſans think *ſublime*; but which appears to me ſadly emphatical, like every thing

thing that comes from the pen of this author, who is, in other reſpects, very eſtimable; for he has ideas and an excellent moral. Thomas will be the *Seneca* of our language; he has talent and ſome real beauties; he will have many bad imitators, who will take only his defects; he will contribute to ſpoil the taſte; but *he will remain*. However, as he has neither profound nor natural ſenſibility, his writings will never rank among claſſic works. Laſtly, I ſend you a new volume of Buffon, with which you will be delighted. What a perfect writer!—and in every ſtyle! How he is by turns ſoft, graceful, and majeſtic! How well he paints! What elegance, what harmony, what propriety of expreſſion! His works will always be the beſt of all the French authors for whoever knows how to ſtudy them with a view to improve his taſte.

LETTER V.

MONSIEUR DU RESNEL'S *Anſwer*.

Gilly, October 10.

No, my friend, I do not think it poſſible to live *in the greateſt intimacy* with ſuch a woman as Pauline, without expoſing one's happineſs and principles. But this intimacy by no means exiſts between her and me. In the ordinary courſe of her life and of mine we ſee each other but ſeldom, about once a week; I never ſee her alone, and we never write to each other; ſo then I do *not live with Pauline in the greateſt intimacy*. And as I have ſolemnly *promiſed* myſelf to make no change in the footing on which I am with her, I am perfectly eaſy. Love is not produced without ſome hope; I cannot conceive any,

any, without being in my own eyes as vile as the Duke de Roſmond: I who am become the intimate friend of the Marquis d'Erneville! I who am witneſs of the affecting union, and who know the mutual attachment of theſe two intereſting beings, ſo worthy of each other! I have thoroughly examined my heart; I find, I confeſs, that its firſt ſentiment is for Pauline; but I find alſo that its moſt fervent deſire is to ſee her adored by her huſband, and to know that ſhe is ſatisfied with him. As long as I preſerve this ſentiment I ſhall remain without fear at Gilly; if I loſe it, I would fly, not only from Burgundy, but from France; I ſhould not think myſelf in ſafety but in the country the moſt remote from Erneville. This, my friend, is my profeſſion of faith; I flatter myſelf that it will diſpel your uneaſineſs.

The moſt pure attachment of a man for a woman has, no doubt, ſomething particularly tender; the difference of ſex renders

it

it more engaging and more delicate; beſides, let us acknowledge it, the perfection of ſenſibility is to be found only in women. A virtuous woman poſſeſſed of feeling is the moſt *endearing* of all beings. Reſpecting women, I have ideas which are peculiar to myſelf; I do not by any means believe that their organization is different from ours; for I do not ſee that phyſical weakneſs gives more moral delicacy, or renders the underſtanding leſs extenſive or leſs ſolid. Paſcal, Pope, and ſeveral others, with very weak phyſical conſtitutions, had genius and greatneſs of ſoul. How many a *Hercules* do we not know who is extremely fooliſh! In ſhort, if, in this inquiry, I endeavour to penetrate the intentions of the author of the univerſe, I find that beings, equally deſtined for immortality, muſt poſſeſs in an equal degree every intellectual faculty, and that their ſouls muſt be ſimilar. Thus I attribute but to education alone the real differences

which we remark between men and women. To imagine that the Creator has formed beings calculated to be intimately united, and yet eſſentially diſſimilar, is a frivolous and ſuperficial idea. If man had not in himſelf all the germs of the qualities which he cheriſhes in women, he would not comprehend them, and could not be charmed by them; and if women were ſuſceptible neither of ſtrength nor greatneſs of ſoul, they would be incapable of feeling the value of every thing that is ſublime. Take away perfect equality of mind and ſoul, and you annihilate every congeniality; you deſtroy all union. In a word, the *conſort* of man ought to be enabled to underſtand him always, to counſel him often, and to ſupply his place ſometimes. Notwithſtanding this very equitable diſtribution of the moſt precious gifts of the Creator, women, entruſted with the care of children, have for ever, in ſociety, a deſtination different from ours. It

is

is Nature herſelf who preſcribes to them a ſedentary way of life, and who devotes them to domeſtic occupations. It is Nature herſelf who excludes them from public employments, the exerciſe of which could not be blended with the duties of a mother and a nurſe. If Nature had perfectly adapted their moral faculties to their ſituations, ſhe would have made women only inferior and ſubordinate beings; and this would have been, as I have already obſerved, an inconſiſtency and an injuſtic the more ſtrange, as they were abſolutely uſeleſs. The difference of ſituations and of education ſufficed for improving the qualities neceſſary to the two ſexes; thus ſtrength and energy are exalted in man, and ſweet ſenſibility in women, without the oppoſite virtues being nugatory or deſtroyed in them. Women, accuſtomed from their infancy to expreſs only by halves ſo many ſentiments, to veil ingeniouſly ſo many ideas, muſt have that quickneſs,

that delicacy which characteriſes them, and which proceed from habit and long exerciſe, and not from a particular organization. This is ſo true, that this pretended difference of organization has never been remarked in women of the lower claſs coarſely brought up. This ſublime plan of ſubordination, ſituation, and equality of faculties, conſtitutes all the charm of the delightful union of the two ſexes. It gives more intereſt to that apparent weakneſs, which, far from being a humiliating inferiority, is only an affecting and generous ſacrifice. It ſets off the dignity of man, become, by love and virtue, the protector of a being equal to himſelf. Theſe ideas, which ennoble empire and dependence, appear to me more juſt and more uſeful than thoſe which degrade women, in order to conſecrate the authority of man, whoſe rights, eſtabliſhed by nature, require only ſentiment and reaſon to be acknowledged and reſpected.

Adieu,

Adieu, my friend; continue to ſend me the news of the day; although a man has quitted the world, he is never ſo perfectly detached from it as not always to take ſome intereſt in what is going on; and, beſides, all my ties with it are not broken, ſince you live in it.

LETTER VI.

From the MARQUIS D'ERNEVILLE *to the* COUNT D'OLBREUSE.

Erneville, September 14.

I AM by no means of opinion, my dear d'Olbreuſe, that the event which you mention *ought to tranquillize me.* On the contrary, it increaſes the ſecret torment that, you know, haunts my mind. O! how incomprehenſible are women!-Nothing they do ſhould aſtoniſh us! But let us ſpeak no more of the matter; let us never ſpeak of it!..... Tell me when I

muſt ſet out. I ſhall go firſt to the waters of Vichi; thence I ſhall depart privately; but I would wiſh not to wait, in order to return with extreme diſpatch. You announce to me that I ſhall probably be *called* in three or four months; this is very vague; you muſt beforehand fix the period with preciſion.

You hope, you ſay, that *the lapſe of ten long months* has effaced a painful remembrance..... Ah! for my happineſs, why have I not ſuch a degree of levity!

Adieu, my dear d'Olbreuſe; our Moulins correſpondent is travelling; for the future addreſs your letters to me under cover to Monſieur L—— at Dijon.

LETTER VII.

From the MARCHIONESS *to the* BARONESS DE VORDAC.

Erneville, January 8.

MY dear friend, what a lively emotion I have juſt felt! At half paſt eight o'clock this morning I was at breakfaſt in the green cabinet, ſeated between Albert and Mademoiſelle du Rocher, when Laurence made his appearance with a little box, directed to me, which he placed on the table. This box was opened; and the lid being taken off we ſaw a paper on which were written theſe words: "*New year's gift for Léocadie.*" I haſtily unpacked, and found ſix charming dimity and muſlin frocks, trimmed with lace, and ſeveral other little things for the uſe of a

child a twelvemonth old. Albert examined theſe preſents; afterwards he looked at me, and ſmiled with tolerable good humour. I was much agitated!.... Albert became penſive..... and in the courſe of a few minutes, reſuming the converſation, "I do not conceive," ſaid he, "by what means this child's parents can "hear of her, and can learn whether ſhe "exiſts or not. You have no correſ-"pondent at Paris?"—"Who! I, Albert! "have a correſpondent that is unknown to "you?"—"Do you think Jacinthe has not "any?"..... At this queſtion, put with a very ſtedfaſt look, Mademoiſelle du Rocher made a very expreſſive ſign of approbation, biting her lips, and ſmiling in the moſt impertinent manner. I turned towards her, ſaying to her: "May I beg "to know, Mademoiſelle, what you "are laughing at?"—"I! Madam?"—"Yes; Albert ſaid nothing pleaſant, and "you laugh.... probably the queſtion

"appeared

" appeared to you ridiculous?"—" *Quite*
" *on the contrary*, Madam, I thought it
" very *judicious*, for Mademoiſelle Jacin-
" the—" . . . .—" Well, finiſh, Mademoi-
" ſelle Jacinthe?" . . . . . " Mademoiſelle
" Jacinthe . . . . . I think that one may
" ſuſpect Mademoiſelle Jacinthe, and that
" the Marchioneſs does not require I
" ſhould reſpect Mademoiſelle Jacinthe?"
"—No, Mademoiſelle; but I would not have
" her accuſed without proofs." At theſe words, Mademoiſelle du Rocher put on that affected air of concern which you know ſhe can aſſume; ſhe ſighed, turned up her eyes to heaven, boaſted of her *evangelical* ſentiments, &c. Albert, by an amiable and mild pleaſantry, put an end to this dialogue.

Mademoiſelle du Rocher has not forgiven me for not having taken her with me to Paris; ſince that time, her hatred for Jacinthe is extremely increaſed; and this

averſion recoils on me. On the other hand, I am likewiſe very much diſſatisfied with Jacinthe; ſhe has aſſumed a peviſhneſs which renders her ſometimes very impertinent. I believe that ſhe loved Le Maire, and that the deſertion of the latter occaſions her great chagrin, the more eſpecially as, notwithſtanding all our inquiries, we have not been able to diſcover what is become of him. All theſe little domeſtic troubles, ſo new to me, do not render my houſe agreeable. Ah, my dear friend! I ſhall never find again the delightful peace that I have enjoyed! Yet Albert's conduct is ſtill unexceptionable. I am very ſure that he does not preſerve the ſmalleſt doubt, and that the opinion of others is become totally indifferent to him as well as to me; for, when at Dijon, thanks to the attention of Monſieur du Reſnel, he ſaw every one return to me with ſo much eagerneſs, he was abſolutely inſenſible to this return. His ſentiments,

in

in this reſpect, are ſimilar to mine; but I remark in him a fund of melancholy that makes me uneaſy, the more as I am unable to divine the cauſe of it. I am certain that this ſadneſs does not relate to me. I have ſeen it viſibly redoubled on certain poſt days..... he writes ſometimes in private..... he no longer ſhews me his letters! O! do not imagine that I am *jealous*; ideas of this kind have not even preſented themſelves to my imagination. I am afraid that there is ſome diſorder in his affairs..... I am afraid that he has ſome ſecret chagrin..... but why conceal it from me? I cannot unravel this myſtery!

The Chevalier de Celtas is to come tomorrow to paſs a few days here. He has for this year paſt ſhewn me an increaſe of friendſhip, which affects me very little; but which perſuades me, however, that he had leſs ſhare than we thought, in the proceedings of Monſieur and Madame d'Or-

geval. I will never truſt him; but, at the ſame time, I cannot believe that he is my enemy. He is volatile, and addicted to ſlander; but he does not want underſtanding, and his heart is not bad.

Adieu, my dear friend; I hope that you will come and ſee us in the courſe of next month. Settle your matters ſo as to paſs with us at leaſt a fortnight.

LETTER VIII.

The BARONESS's *Anſwer.*

January 15.

You are ſtill credulous, my dear Pauline, and you too eaſily forget acts of malice. Can you ſay that the Chevalier de Celtas had no ſhare in the proceedings of Monſieur and Madame d'Orgeval, when I acquainted you of the enormities that he

he had told Monſieur de Vordac, before your return from Paris, and even ſome days after? Do not think, my dear friend, that he has changed his opinion. His ſoul is formed to ſee nothing but artifice in virtue, and never to heſitate in admitting vice. In blackening you, he does not imagine he utters a falſehood; he is one of thoſe people whom their very perverſeneſs preſerves from the crime of calumniating wilfully; he has, in this caſe, the frightful ſincerity of a wicked man, the ill that he ſpreads he believes; this is, in his eyes, a thing ſo ſimple and ſo natural! I know, beyond all poſſibility of doubt, that he ſaid five weeks ago that Monſieur du Reſnel is your *preſent lover*; he added, that he *flattered himſelf* it would not be impoſſible to ſupplant him. I aſſure you that this monſter has the inſolent hope to ſucceed in ſeducing you. He ſaid alſo to the ſame perſon, that little Léocadie is a *ſtriking* likeneſs of the Duke de Roſmond. This,

for

for inſtance, can only be an abſurd calumny. Judge then of the man! When I ſee you I will explain to you how I learnt all this; you will admit that nothing is more certain. Be good and generous, my affectionate friend; but be not a dupe; you have been ſo too long. With reſpect to Albert, you ought, indeed, to be perfectly eaſy. Monſieur du Reſnel, to whom he certainly ſpeaks with confidence, told me that he cheriſhed and eſteemed you more than ever. So, dear Pauline, you may ſtill be happy, and henceforth nothing can diſturb your happineſs.

Adieu, my friend, my dearly beloved Pauline. I ſhall write to you again on Monday by Monſieur du Reſnel, who will paſs two days at our houſe, before he goes to Erneville.

LETTER IX.

The MARCHIONESS's *Anſwer.*

Erneville, January 20.

I AM convinced of your friendſhip from your *implacable* reſentment againſt the Chevalier de Celtas. Believe me, my excellent friend, I would act ſo for you; yes, I would have no indulgence for the perſons who might attack your reputation. But I am more equitable in my own cauſe. I own to you that the ſuſpicions of thoſe I love, and who perfectly know my heart, have appeared to me inexcuſable; but I think it quite natural that perſons who have only a ſuperficial idea of my character, ſhould be deceived by very extraordinary appearances!..... I thought that a brother-in-law and ſiſter-in-law who ſaw

me

me often, who ſhewed me friendſhip, ought to have ſuſpended their opinion, and above all, not to have ſought to injure me; but the Chevalier de Celtas is neither my relation nor my friend, he may know me imperfectly, and ſpeak ſlightly of me without being a *monſter*. With reſpect to the project of ſeduction which you attribute to him, (don't be angry, my angel,) this article of your letter made me laugh. In truth, I do not believe that he harbours ſo ſtrange an idea as that. As for what he ſaid of the ſtriking likeneſs of Léocadie..... I ſhall aſtoniſh you greatly.....he made a malicious, but juſt remark. Yes, it is not *an infamous falſehood*, it is a truth. It ſhould ſeem that heaven takes a pleaſure in aſſembling unheard-of accidents round me. This confounds me. For, in fact, the likeneſs becomes ſuch, that it is impoſſible not to remark it, I never ſaw any ſo perfect. Monſieur du Reſnel ſays nothing about

it;

it; but I am ſure that he has already made this ſingular obſervation..... The laſt time that he came here, he looked at this child with a ſtedfaſt and ſurpriſed air that did not eſcape me..... However handſome this dear little girl may be, what would I not give that ſhe might have another face! Muſt ſhe have features, the reſemblance of which are ſo odious to me! Alas! It is not her fault, and I ſhall never have the injuſtice to love her the leſs on that account.

Adieu, my friend; I wiſh for you always; but I expect you now with more impatience than ever.

LETTER X.

From the VISCOUNT DE ST. MĒRAN *to* MONSIEUR DU RESNEL.

Paris, April 15.

I HAD foreſeen that the Duke de Roſmond would be revenged on Poligni. Liſten to a ſtrange ſtory. The Duke de Roſmond, as you know, has a ſiſter much younger than himſelf; and who, by the will of her great aunt, the old Counteſs de ****, that died about two years ago, is become the richeſt match about court. This young girl, eighteen years of age, is ſaid to be an incomparable beauty; ſhe reſides in her brother's houſe; ſhe lives there in the moſt profound retirement, and even remains in her own room when the Ducheſs has company. Her relations alone have

the

the privilege of dining and ſupping with her. Poligni, as well as many others, had the greateſt deſire to ſee her; and, about three weeks ago, the Duke promiſed him that he ſhould dine with her. In fact, Poligni was invited, and on entering the Dutcheſs's apartment, the firſt object that ſtruck his eyes was Mademoiſelle de Roſmond. I will ſpare you the deſcription that Poligni gave me of her perſon; it would require four pages at leaſt to ſend you an extract of it; it will be ſufficient for you to know that Mademoiſelle de Roſmond unites the moſt ſtriking graces to the moſt perfect regularity in features and ſhape, and that her mind is as perfect and as delicate as her perſon is accompliſhed. Poligni, dazzled, enraptured, betrayed the impreſſion that he felt; the Duke appeared charmed by it, and gave him to underſtand very clearly that he might aſpire to his ſiſter's hand, if he was ſo fortunate as to pleaſe her. Poligni is young,

young, and amiable, has infinite wit, ſome fortune, and is of a very good family; he began to hope, and became madly in love. A ſecond interview completely turned his brain: he then ſpoke to the Duke and Dutcheſs; his hopes were ſtrengthened; but the Dutcheſs ſtarted a few gentle objections on the flightineſs of his conduct, and his public connexion with little Dercy; on this, Poligni aſked for a pen and ink, wrote a very formal parting epiſtle, read it aloud, and delivered it to the Duke, begging him to ſend it to its addreſs; which was executed at the very moment. Two days after, a freſh interview, an augmentation of love, and a promiſe of the Duke to ſpeak to his ſiſter. From that day, Poligni has ſeen no more of Mademoiſelle de Roſmond; and the Duke, urged to give an anſwer, at laſt ſaid, yeſterday, that he was extremely concerned *at the want of taſte of his ſiſter*, who perſiſted in maintaining that ſhe felt for Poligni

ligni an *unconquerable antipathy*. Poor Poligni's rage is inexpreſſible; and I pity him, for I really believe that he has conceived a real paſſion. He is well puniſhed for his paſt errors, the recital of which, no doubt, exaggerated by the Duke, muſt have produced that antipathy, which it is impoſſible to have againſt his perſon. What do you think of this refined ſcheme of revenge? Poligni is brave, and would have fought the Duke, did he not ſtill preſerve a faint hope, which makes him reſpect the brother of her he loves. Thanks to love he is *converted!* I rejoice at it, for I have a great friendſhip for him. Moreover, the Duke de Roſmond has got hold of little Dercy, whom he has obliged to quit the opera.

I have no great news, beſides this, to tell you to-day. You know Madame de ****; I have picked up from her an expreſſion, which I have promiſed myſelf to tell you. It has been long ſaid, with

reaſon, that devotion for certain people was no more than a profeſſion. Madame de * * * * is a proof of the juſtneſs of this remark. Ugly and deformed, from the age of twenty ſhe has given herſelf up to devotion, and, in conſequence, notwithſtanding the univerſal faſhion in France, ſhe has never worn *rouge*. Some one took into his head the other day, in ſpeaking to her of devotion, to aſk her what ſort of ſcruple had determined her, while living in the world, never to wear *rouge*, and what harm ſhe found in wearing it? "I "find no more," anſwered ſhe, "than in "wearing powder, but it is the cuſtom." This expreſſion, which ingenuouſly eſcaped her, is pleaſant; for ſhe did not mean, it is the cuſtom in the world, ſince it is quite the contrary; ſhe underſtood within herſelf, that it is the cuſtom *among us devotees*. And then, here is a very meritorious act of devotion, which has no other object than to proclaim an auſtere piety.

You

You aſk me, whether I ſtill continue to be pleaſed with my prince. As I have no ambition, I ſhall always be equally ſatisfied with him. Who aſpires to nothing cannot be diſcontented. This prince is amiable; he has a great deal of natural underſtanding; but, like almoſt all princes, he is extremely indolent, and ſuffers himſelf to be guided in all things by people who are often inferior to him in abilities. The world is inceſſantly criticiſing the pride of princes; for my part, I am continually aſtoniſhed at their exceſſive humility. If they want to write a letter, they muſt have it dictated to them; they take not the ſmalleſt ſtep without conſulting; they will neither act nor judge for themſelves: what can there be more modeſt? It is true that they have been taught this habit from their infancy, (and not without good reaſon!) and another very pernicious *mania* reſults from it, that of never being able to be alone. If the prince writes, he muſt have

a *co-*

a *co-adjutor*, a ſecretary; if he reads, he muſt have a reader; if he wiſhes neither to work nor to conſult, nor even to chat, he is ſtill in want of a *witneſs*, of a favourite who is pinned to his ſleeve. Much art and attention are employed to keep them in this dread of ſolitude; for were they left to themſelves, without any thing to divert their mind, who knows what might happen? Perhaps *they might think all alone*; perhaps *they might reflect!* This is alarming; and it is, above all, what muſt be prevented.

I have not had it in my power to do any thing for the young painter for whom you intereſt yourſelf. His picture is enchanting, according to the opinion of the greateſt connoiſſeurs; but the firſt *painter* of the prince protects another artiſt who, like himſelf, will never have but a very indifferent talent; and the prince has refuſed a maſter-piece, while he has given five hundred louis for a deteſtable picture. I ſee

every

every day things of this kind, and ſo many penſions and favours laviſhed on authors not only deſtitute of genius, but contemptible and dangerous! ..... When we reflect how incapable people of talent are to puſh themſelves in the world; how many advantages intriguers have over them in the road of ſucceſs; how difficult it is for princes, even the moſt enlightened, to diſcover real merit, of which no one ſpeaks to them unleſs to calumniate it; we eaſily excuſe the miſtakes of princes, and find that even flattery cannot have exaggerated in the praiſes beſtowed on Lewis the fourteenth for his diſcernment in this reſpect.

I ſend you *Les Saiſons*, the poem of Monſieur de *St. Lambert*; you will find in it ſome beautiful deſcriptions.

*Mais trop de vers entraînent trop d'ennui**,

when there is a deficiency of imagination and ſenſibility. Every one admits that it

* But too many verſes are too fatiguing to the mind. *Greſſet.*

is impoſſible to read the whole of this work at once; and this little *inconvenience* is not even conſidered as a *defect*. We require that a dramatic piece ſhould be intereſting from one end to the other; we are equally exacting in every work of amuſement, and to ſpeak truth, as a reader, I think this law ſufficiently reaſonable; but we grant poems (eſpecially in the French language) the excluſive privilege of being dreadfully tireſome. Provided the verſes be well made, the critics have nothing to ſay; plan, novelty, invention, intereſt are trifles for which we muſt not look in this *ſublime* ſpecies of poetry, or at leaſt which we ſhall certainly not find, even in the *Henriade*.

But I forget myſelf; I am invited to a *reading*. I will give you an account of it in my next letter.

Adieu, my friend.

LETTER XI.

From the COUNT D'OLBREUSE *to the* MARQUIS D'ERNEVILLE.

Paris, July 1.

THE moment is arrived, my dear Marquis. Be between the 15th and 25th of next month at *Fontenay-aux-Roſes*; the truſt ſhall be delivered to you; we will be there to receive you, and with all poſſible myſtery. We ſhall have none but ſervants who do not know you. You will take up your quarters in the little white houſe; and I hope that you will conſent to paſs a few days with us. I am perfectly aware that you cannot go to Paris; but you abſolutely run no riſk in remaining at Fontenay with the precautions which we ſhall take. We expect you with impatience, and we ſhall ſee you again with the moſt lively pleaſure.

LETTER XII.

From the CHEVALIER DE CELTAS *to* MONSIEUR D'ORGEVAL.

Autun, Auguſt 13.

How all things are brought to light, my dear d'Orgeval! You fully believe that your brother is at the waters of Vichi; by no means, he is in Paris; and this is the reaſon why he did not chooſe that his wife ſhould make this journey, and why he took with him only the *truſty Laurence.* He really went to Vichi at firſt; but the next day he ſaid he was ill, and old Laurence who remained behind, pretends that his maſter keeps his room. However, no phyſician is called in, no viſit is received, and Laurence goes out only to carry letters to the poſt, which probably his maſter has left,

left, putting to them a forward date, in order to be ſent to the Marchioneſs, as if they were written from Vichi. Unfortunately for the Marquis, little Madame C*** is at Vichi this year. You are *not* ignorant of *the tender ſentiments* which ſhe formerly entertained for your brother: deſpiſed love has turned to rage; hatred makes us inquiſitive and clear-ſighted; carefully watching *the great Albert*, ſhe has divined and diſcovered what I have juſt told you; ſhe has written theſe particulars to Fla*** who ſhewed me her letter. What do you ſay to this?

I ſhall ſet out in four days to pay you a viſit, and I mean to ſtay with you during the vintage. We will go together to Erneville. I aſſure you that, at preſent, I pity your poor ſiſter-in-law; a tranſitory weakneſs for the moſt captivating of men is at her age very excuſable; and nothing of all this would have happened if your

brother had not abandoned her, in order to go to Paris, and commit the moſt ſhameful follies. As for du Reſnel, I believe he is now *in for his money*, and that all the expences, incurred at Dijon, have ſerved only to ſhew his pretenſions and his ſelf-conceit; for you ſee that his viſits to Erneville are not more frequent, and that even in the Marquis's abſence, he dares not go thither, which fully proves that the Marchioneſs has forbid him; an order which certainly comes from her, and not from Albert, who appears more than ever taken with du Reſnel's pretended merit. We muſt be juſt: Pauline, in all this, conducts herſelf with wiſdom and prudence.

Adieu, my dear fellow; my compliments to Monſieur Dupui, and my reſpects to your amiable conſort.

LETTER XIII.

From the MARCHIONESS *to* MADAME DE VORDAC.

August 18.

THERE are in the world people whoſe malice is of a very atrocious nature. Figure to yourſelf, my dear friend, that I have received an anonymous letter againſt Albert, in which I am informed that he has juſt ſet off ſecretly for Paris, at the ſame time giving out at Vichi, that he is ill and confined to his room. You may well ſuppoſe that I do not give the ſmalleſt credit to this calumny; yet it ſtill occaſions me great uneaſineſs reſpecting Albert's health. Had I believed it, I ſhould have ſet out immediately; but the unfortunate journey that I made eighteen months ago,

on ſuch an occaſion, has taught me prudence: ſo I have contented myſelf with diſpatching La France with a letter for Albert, in which I conjure him, if he is ill, to allow me to go and nurſe him. La France will ſee him, and will bring me an exact account of his health. It is only eighty miles from here to Vichi; it is true that there is a croſs road for ſix and thirty miles: La France ſet out the day before yeſterday; I expect him every minute. Monſieur and Madame d'Orgeval and the Chevalier de Celtas arrived here to-day. In the trouble I am in, I was unable to conceal my melancholy; and, without mentioning the anonymous letter, I ſaid that I was uneaſy reſpecting Albert's health; that I had ſent La France to Vichi, and ſoon expected him back. They ſeem to take an intereſt in my concern; and the Chevalier de Celtas told me, indeed, that he had ſeen a letter from Madame de C***, who is at Vichi, and who wrote word that Albert kept his room; but that his indiſpoſition

diſpoſition was ſo trifling that he had not called in a phyſician. I ſaid that I would give any thing in the world to ſee this letter. "It is Fla*** who has received "it," anſwered the Chevalier, "and I "might have it if I choſe; but it con- "tains, beſides, ſome malicious and abſurd "reflections which I would not ſubmit to "your ſight." This hint was for me a ray of light; you know the character of Madame de C*** and her hatred for Albert and me; is it not clear that this anonymous letter comes from her? But what is it to me, provided Albert be not ſeriouſly ill? I aſſure you, my dear friend, that, on this occaſion, the Chevalier de Celtas is amiable in his behaviour to me. Seeing the exceſs of my inquietude, he offer- ed me this morning to go himſelf to Vichi. In ſhort, he was moved; the tears ſtood in his eyes; this cannot but be natural.

Adieu, my dear friend; I deliver this letter to your meſſenger, and as ſoon as I

have any news, I will again ſend you an expreſs.

LETTER XIV.

From the ſame to the ſame.

Auguſt 20.

O! How I want to open my heart and ſpeak to a friend! I ſhould cruelly afflict my mother by confiding to her this melancholy ſecret!..... Ah! let her be ignorant of it for ever! And you, my dear friend, receive it as a ſacred truſt, and let it always remain buried in your boſom.

This morning at eight o'clock, the Chevalier de Celtas, who really ſhews me a ſincere intereſt, knocked at my door, calling out, "*La France is coming!*" I dreſſed myſelf, threw a cloak over my ſhoulders, and came out in haſte. The Chevalier

Chevalier gave me his arm; we went down ſtairs, and, from the veſtibule, I peceived through the door, which ſtood open, La France getting off his horſe. "Well, La France!" exclaimed I, "how is Monſieur d'Erneville?"—"I will tell my miſtreſs every thing." The air and tone with which theſe words were pronounced, made me ſhudder. I ceaſed queſtioning him; and, quitting the Chevalier's arm without thinking of paying him the ſmalleſt compliment, I bade La France follow me; I went up again to my room, and ſhut myſelf in there with him. Attend, my friend, to the ſtory that he told me. Not having been able to procure horſes, he did not arrive at Vichi till the 17th; he went directly to Albert's houſe, and found there, at that moment, only a little girl twelve years old, who was taking care of the ground floor, occupied by tenants gone out that day, which was a Sunday. La France, naturally very reſerved, inquired

for *Laurence* without ſaying from whom he came. The little girl anſwered that poor Laurence had had an apoplectic fit two evenings before, was ſenſeleſs and dying!.... At this melancholy news La France wiſhed to be conducted to Albert; the little girl anſwered him, laughing, that, ſince Laurence's illneſs, it had been diſcovered that Albert was no longer at Vichi; but that the landlord was not at all uneaſy, becauſe he had left his trunk and a great many clothes in his apartment. In conſequence of this information, La France went to poor Laurence, whom he found paralytic, and at the point of death: he had a nurſe. La France, very prudently concealing his commiſſion, gave himſelf out for Dumel, Laurence's nephew, who is in ſervice at Moulins. The nurſe then delivered him an old leather pocket-book containing a few papers which ſhe had found, ſhe ſaid, on the table; ſhe added, that ſhe did not know whether there was

any

any money; that having ſeen in the drawer of the commode *two letters* ſealed, directed to the Marchioneſs d'Erneville, ſhe had put them in the poſt that very day. La France paſſed the night and the following day with this poor man, who, without having recovered his ſenſes for a moment, died in the night of the 19th. La France left money to bury him, and immediately ſet out on his way back to Erneville. Half an hour after having heard this ſtory, there were brought me at once two letters from Albert, both dated from *Vichi*, the one *on the 21ſt* of this month, the other *on the 25th*; and to-day is but *the 20th!* Theſe are the letters, ready written, which poor Laurence's nurſe found and put in the poſt office on the 17th. The poſt not going out from Vichi on that day, I could not receive them till this morning. This is not all; I found in Laurence's pocket-book a little memorandum in Albert's hand-writing, by which I ſee that he left him

him five letters for me, that each letter had, by the ſide of the ſeal, a little number which indicated the days on which he was to ſend them. The two that I have received to-day were not to be put into the poſt office till the 21ſt and the 25th. I have given La France a preſent of ten louis, at the ſame time praiſing his prudent conduct, and ſtrictly enjoining him to tell a ſtory of my own invention, in which I make him not able to procure horſes, and then loſe his way, as well as his money, and at laſt come back to Erneville without having been at Vichi: as the Chevalier de Celtas had heard him make me a mournful and myſterious anſwer, I was in hopes that he would believe this fable; yet he is the only one that is not the dupe of it. He told me, in private, that he gave me his word of honour to accredit, as much as lay in his power, what I wiſhed ſhould be believed; that nevertheleſs, from *certain reports*, it was not difficult for him to divine

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the truth which I wiſhed *ſo generouſly to conceal.* I admitted nothing of what he ſaid; but I underſtand that Madame de C***'s letter, which he has ſeen, lets him but too much into the ſecret. However, I cannot, I repeat it, but be pleaſed with the ſenſibility which he ſhews for me; I own that I ſhould never have thought him capable of it. I have promiſed La France an annual gratification in order to ſecure to me his diſcretion; and indeed he lies with an effrontery and a detail that have perſuaded every one, with the exception of the Chevalier de Celtas. I ſaid that I was tranquillized, becauſe I had received excellent news from Albert; and, for the firſt time in my life, I have had ſufficient command over myſelf to diſſemble the dreadful perturbation of my mind. Albert has no longer any confidence in me! I will not tear from him his ſecrets, and ſtill leſs embarraſs and afflict him; I am therefore determined that he ſhall be

ignorant

ignorant of what I have diſcovered. Beſides, I own that it would give me pain to have it known to what a degree he is changed towards me. In ſhort

Le devoir d'une épouſe eſt de paroître heureuſe *.

I muſt then conceal ſuch melancholy details. Yes, my friend, I will lament them only with you!

Albert is in Paris! Albert debaſes himſelf to diſſemble, and with me too! Albert deceives me!

I feel much leſs uneaſineſs reſpecting the nature of the ſecret, than pain at the myſtery which he makes to me of it. At the bottom of my heart, I am perſuaded that this ſecret contains nothing offenſive to me; I ſhould even believe that it relates to a thing entruſted to him in confidence, and in which he has abſolutely no perſonal concern, had I not remarked in him a fund of melancholy which he cannot

* The duty of a wife is to appear happy. *Deſtouches.*

conceal.

conceal. But I alſo imagine that reaſons of probity, or at leaſt of delicacy, force him to be ſilent. All this does not excuſe him towards me; he ought at leaſt to have told me that he was engaged in an affair which he could not communicate to me, and which compelled him to make a ſecret journey to Paris; I ſhould have been perfectly ſatisfied. But to deceive me! To rank me in the claſs of perſons who are the moſt indifferent to him! To have in a ſervant more confidence than in me!..... Ah, my dear friend! did I deſerve to be treated thus?.....

I ſuppoſe, ſince he has left letters only up to the 25th, that he will return to Vichi on the 27th or 28th. I ſhall write to him juſt in my uſual way; I ſhall tell him, in jeſt, La France's pretended adventures; I ſhall ſay that the letters which I have received have removed my uneaſineſs; I ſhall add that, unthinkingly, he has miſdated theſe two laſt letters: in ſhort, I ſhall aſ-

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ſume the tone of gaiety and ſecurity. I ſhall diſſemble too!..... Ah! this diſſimulation will be very innocent; it will even be generous; and I feel that, beforehand, my heart reproaches itſelf for it!..... What is become of that intercourſe full of affection, candour, and unreſerved confidence!..... Great God! the ſweeteſt recollections ſerve now but to afflict me!

Adieu, my friend. Monſieur d'Orgeval, his wife, and the Chevalier de Celtas, go away to-morrow; it will be a conſolation to me to find myſelf alone again; but if you could come next week, how grateful ſhould I be!

LETTER XV.

From the ſame to the ſame.

September 1.

ALBERT arrived here yeſterday. He told me that the waters of Vichi had done him *harm*, that he had *kept his room for ſeveral days*, &c. He *informed* me of the ſudden death of worthy Laurence..... I was obliged to liſten to all this with a compoſed countenance!.... However, he is fallen away; he has ſuffered!..... Ah! I forgive him all! What can this ſecret be?..... It certainly is not a derangement in his fortune; I have propoſed to him ſeveral economical reforms, and the manner in which he anſwered me on this ſubject, proves to me that his affairs

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are by no means deranged. No, it is a ſecret of the heart; but I am not concerned in it; and I am ignorant of it! Another woman in my place would have ſtrange ſuſpicions. Well, it is impoſſible for me to believe that he has to reproach himſelf with a *real infidelity*; and I would not call thus, in a man, a tranſient inclination for one of thoſe ſeducing and contemptible objects who make every advance, and whoſe charms can ſo eaſily lead reaſon aſtray for a moment.

The attachment which we have for each other has never, I believe, been love; but it ought to be a preſervative againſt a great paſſion. How could Albert have for another woman an exalted or a profound ſentiment? Ah! if he had ceaſed to love Pauline, his heart would be worn out! But I have certainty of being always as dear to him: I even find, ſince the period of my misfortunes and of his injuſtice, ſomething

ſomething more warm in his affection. How explain ſuch a contradiction? His ſenſibility has aſſumed a much more animated character; he is with me, if not more affectionate, at leaſt much more aſſiduous, and more marked in his attention; and yet he refuſes me his confidence; with Pauline he indulges himſelf without ſcruple, in poſitive, deliberate, and ſyſtematic falſehoods! I cannot fathom this buſineſs.

I have another ſecret to tell you, my dear friend, and I am a little more embarraſſed at it; for I have had, on this ſubject, a fooliſh obſtinacy, and an unpardonable credulity..... That inſolent Chevalier de Celtas!..... You are in the right. Great God! I am then much degraded! who would have dared to make me *a declaration of love* eighteen months ago? and the man whoſe lawful homage I diſdained, the man whom I refuſed to marry, attempts at this day to ſeduce the wife of Albert!.....

Into

Into what diſgrace am I fallen!..... Alas! It is well known that Albert is changed towards me! it is well known that he has ſuſpected me, and that I no longer poſſeſs his confidence, and I am deſpiſed and inſulted!.....

Inſolent and mean coxcomb! Probably he was the author of the anonymous letter that I received! How he will hate me in future! I treated him like the moſt ſtupid and vileſt of men: this feeble revenge conſoled me a little. He was incenſed with rage; in truth, I believe that he threatened me; but I did not rightly hear his laſt ſpeeches, having quitted him with great precipitation. This paſſed in the garden, where, unfortunately, I was alone with him for about half an hour, the day after La France's return; and the day of his departure and that of Monſieur and Madame d'Orgeval I again ſaw this impertinent fellow, an hour after, but in the preſence of witneſſes; he affected a very free

free and eaſy air, more ironical than ever. He was very red in the face; and his look, always equivocal and deceitful, had ſomething ferocious and terrifying. Now that I know him, I own to you that he frightens me; I think him capable of every thing. I who was looking forward only to ſo ſweet a proſpect, no longer ſee in it, at preſent, any thing but miſchief and troubles. Come, my friend, come as ſoon as you can. O! how much I want to open my heart to you! Come!

LETTER XVI.

From MONSIEUR D'ORGEVAL *to the* CHEVALIER DE CELTAS.

January 8.

NOTHING new in our part of the world, my dear Chevalier, except that the little *female baſtard* has received her *anonymous new year's gift*, exactly in the ſame manner as laſt year. This is a droll farce; it will be curious to ſee how long it will laſt.

We intend to hunt foxes this winter. I am ſhort of hounds; let me know whether it be true that Bel*** is going to diſpoſe of his pack; I ſhall, in that caſe, be able to purchaſe part of his hunting eſtabliſhment.

I get a great deal ſtronger at billiards. Du Reſnel will now give me but two points;

points; my brother ſtill perſiſts in giving me four; but he loſes every game.

Adieu, my dear fellow; Deniſe deſires to be remembered to you; ſhe expects every moment to be brought to bed, and ſuffers greatly. As ſhe has no *intereſt* in concealing her *rotundity*, ſhe is monſtrous. Faith! I know not how a woman can hide a contraband pregnancy. This appears to me incomprehenſible. Yet it is what we have ſeen even till the *ninth month!*....

January 9th, Six o'clock in the Morning.

P. S. I open my letter to tell you that my wife is juſt happily delivered of a little girl.—The mother and child are well.

LETTER XVII.

From the VISCOUNT DE ST. MÉRAN *to* MONSIEUR DU RESNEL.

Paris, April 2.

I REALLY pity poor Poligni; he is ſtill deſperately in love with Mademoiſelle de Roſmond, but without any hope. This young girl, who is ſought after by the firſt people of diſtinction at court, ſhews a great averſion to marriage, and even to the world; ſhe goes neither to public places nor to balls; when her ſiſter-in-law gives any great ſupper, ſhe never makes her appearance; it is ſaid that ſhe has a no ſmall ſhare of underſtanding, and that her ſole ambition is to improve herſelf: all this is inſtilled into her neither by her brother nor her ſiſter-in-law, who have

by no means a taſte for retirement and ſtudy. The Duke, who is her guardian, leaves her entirely her own miſtreſs; it is very ſingular at nineteen, to make ſuch a uſe of liberty, eſpecially with a beauty ſo celebrated. Here then is a woman of no common character. Indeed, I am glad that I am not acquainted with her; I ſhould be afraid of experiencing the fate of Poligni. However, Mademoiſelle de Roſmond's conduct ſeems ſo extraordinary, that every one wiſhes to find in it particular motives; for it is *impoſſible*, according to the general idea, for a woman at her age to prefer reading to dancing, and to be ſo handſome without having a wiſh to ſhew herſelf.

One thing that muſt end, by making us miſanthropes, or at leaſt quite ſavage, is, that with a ſoul not of the common ſtamp, and an original character, one is almoſt always reckoned to be governed by hypocriſy

or affectation. Do an heroic action, you are ſuppoſed to have a ſecret intereſt; ſhew ſublime ſentiments, no one thinks you are ſincere. The great world are far leſs perverſe than is imagined, by thoſe who have never lived among them; the *good taſte of good company*, by refining all the rules of propriety, has not been uſeleſs to virtue; it has formed a ſort of code which is not ſufficiently complete, and may be reproached with ſome important omiſſions; but all the principles of which appear to me eſtimable, and the ideas noble and delicate: theſe ſocial laws are reſpected; we cannot infringe them openly without diſhonour. Thus, no courtier who does not wiſh to experience this misfortune, will ſolicit the place that is coveted by his intimate friend, or will accept the one of which he has juſt been deprived. No courtier will be afraid to ſhew gratitude to the diſgraced miniſter who has been his benefactor. At court, and in the great world,

world, ingratitude and meanneſs are never pardoned; and if intereſt and power have ſometimes forced people to tolerate theſe vices, it muſt be admitted that ſuch inſtances are very rare, and that they are even ſtill puniſhed then, by ſilent and univerſal contempt. But the world believe only in virtues which they themſelves preſcribe. Every thing that exceeds theſe bounds is, in their eyes, nothing but extravagance and falſehood. We feel that eſteem is neceſſary to the agreeableneſs as well as to the ſecurity of ſociety; ſelf-love even makes a want of it, ſince we diſgrace ourſelves by living with thoſe who are deſpiſed, and this it is that conſtitutes what is juſtly called *bad company*, a numerous circle, where there is no choice in admiſſion, and nothing occaſions it to be refuſed. So then, people in high life are willing to eſteem, and they abſtain from admiration; for in order to indulge in that ſweet ſentiment, we muſt have a pure or very elevated

ſoul. An honeſt man may take a pleaſure in the world; but to be always charmed by it, he muſt have a mind of the common mould; with great ſentiments, with a profound ſenſibility, we find in it only an injurious incredulity, which ends by diſguſting us with it entirely.

You will be little ſatisfied with the pamphlets which I ſend you: they are four very cold *panegyrics*. As for the two ſpeeches of *d'Alembert*, they are like all that author's literary productions, deſtitute of nature and intereſt: that writer, a bad imitator of Fontenelle, will certain not paſs to poſterity, except by his works on geometry. The rage for writing panegyrics is univerſal at this day; true it is that we praiſe none but the dead, and indemnify ourſelves by defaming the living. It requires judgment only to write a *critique*; but it requires ſoul to make a good panegyric, and all our panegyriſts are deficient in ſenſibility. Judge of this by

by the mere date of the panegyric on Madame Géoffrin, which d'Alembert, her intimate friend, had the *courage* to *compoſe* a few days after her death! However, all theſe panegyrics can ſerve only to prepare falſe materials for the hiſtory of our literature; bad as they are, they will one day be conſulted for the purpoſe of furniſhing facts, and the falſehoods with which they abound will be quoted as certain truths.

Adieu, my friend; I will do every thing in my power to paſs with you the month of July; and if I am obliged to go to ***, I will certainly make myſelf amends for it this autumn.

It is ſaid that Madame du Reſnel is in a galloping conſumption. She is going to Nice.

LETTER XVIII.

From the MARQUIS D'ERNEVILLE *to* MONSIEUR DU RESNEL.

I SPENT yeſterday ſo agreeable an evening, that I take a great pleaſure in retracing it to myſelf with all its particulars. Pauline read me a novel of her compoſition, which, without partiality, I thought one of the prettieſt things of the kind that I have ever heard. As you are to come with the Baron and Baroneſs in the beginning of next month, I have made Pauline promiſe that ſhe would read to you this little work; but ſhe is very much afraid of you, and ſhe wiſhes to know, before-hand, what you think of *authoreſſes*. Write to me at length on this ſubject, and as ſoon as you poſſibly can. For my part, I think that

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if a taſte for writing does not produce pedantry, and make a woman diſdain domeſtic duties, it cannot but be uſeful; and in every ſhape, independently of its forming the mind, it neceſſarily inſpires an averſion to a diſſipated and indolent kind of life; and almoſt all women would be rational, if they became ſedentary, and took a pleaſure in their own family. Provided women do not play deep, and their paſſion for this amuſement be *pure*, that is to ſay, provided they love play for the ſake of play alone, it is not made a crime in them to paſs four or five hours a day in ſhuffling and dealing out cards. It muſt, however, be admitted, that this occupation in a mother of a family is neither uſeful nor exemplary, and that the ſame portion of time devoted to reflection, meditation, and writing, would be better employed.

Pauline wiſhes me to announce to you that there is no love in her novel; and I can aſſure you, that it is not the leſs in-

tereſting on that account. We are too apt to imagine that love is abſolutely neceſſary in productions of this kind; we ſhall get the better of this idea, and then novels will be leſs unnatural and more inſtructive. If in dramatic works, and even in epic poems, ſo lively an intereſt can be excited without love, why ſhould not the ſame ſucceſs be obtained in a novel? Senſibility can, no doubt, lend ſublime traits to love; but love painted indifferently can ſtill pleaſe, becauſe, if it touches not the heart, it amuſes the imagination. This is not the caſe with other ſentiments; if the expreſſion of them is not ſtrictly conformable to truth, they no longer have any thing to attach our intereſt. There is a ſort of language conſecrated to love, and, worn out as it is, it ſtill charms a great number of readers; but to make maternal love, filial affection, and friendſhip ſpeak, there exiſts but one language, it is that of nature; it is not to be learned, the mind has never found

found means to imitate it, the heart inſpires it, and no reader can miſtake it. This is the reaſon why all authors prefer, in general, ſubjects where love furniſhes both the main point and the acceſſory details.

Adieu, my friend; if you have not time to anſwer us before the 14th, do not write to me till the 22d; becauſe I am obliged to make a little excurſion to Dijon; but I ſhall ſtay there only three or four days.

LETTER XIX.

MONSIEUR DU RESNEL'S *Anſwer.*

Gilly, July 9.

PAULINE afraid of me! ..... Do you know that nothing appears to me more offenſive; for ſhe can be afraid of none but fools and miſchief-makers. Fools, becauſe they diſapprove of every thing that

is not common, every thing that is out of the uſual track; and miſchief-makers, becauſe they are all corrupted by pride, and are conſequently envious. But, in ſhort, Pauline wiſhes to know my opinion reſpecting *authoreſſes*, and, notwithſtanding all my *rancour*, I am to ſpeak my mind freely: I muſt obey her.

I think that there exiſts between men and women a perfect equality of organization and of intellectual faculties; ſo I think that the latter may cultivate letters and the ſciences with full as much ſucceſs as ourſelves. Every creature being bound to fulfil his deſtination, has no right to diſpoſe of time according to his fancy, and cannot give himſelf up to his particular taſtes till he has diſcharged the duties of his ſituation. But as we ought conſtantly to prefer the occupations preſcribed by duty to thoſe which are only the reſult of inclination, we ought therefore to take care that the latter do not become *paſſions*. It

is

is a temerity, and a great error, to imagine that we cannot at all times maſter our paſſions. They become ſuch only through our own fault; and when we have ſuffered them to gather ſtrength and take root, it is no longer poſſible to compound with them. We cannot moderate them; we muſt ſuddenly and irrevocably renounce them, or elſe become their ſlave. It is in this that I particularly admire the ſupreme wiſdom of the arbitrary ſovereign of our deſtinies, who gives us ſo much ſtrength againſt *growing* paſſions, and who gives *grown* paſſions ſo much power againſt us. Our weakneſs then becomes a juſt puniſhment for our imprudence; yet, in this extremity, we have ſtill remaining the reſource of a powerful effort that can emancipate us from them; but it is only by making the moſt painful ſacrifice. We muſt give up all. I have already obſerved, there is no reducing a violent paſſion to a moderate inclination;

inclination; to get rid of it, we muſt have recourſe to an abſolute divorce. If man could oppoſe to great paſſions a moral force capable of modifying them, his life would be a thouſand times more tempeſtuous; he would ceaſe to fear the paſſions, he would never adopt the project of renouncing them, he would even be deſirous of preſerving them for ever, and the faculty of maſtering them ſeldom employed, would ſerve but to render him more culpable, by depriving him of a ſalutary terror, and prolonging to the grave his follies and his errors.

But let us return to *authoreſſes*. From all that I have juſt ſaid, it ſeems to me that a taſte for writing has a great inconvenience for them as long as they are in the bloom of youth; the aſſiduous attentions required by little children, and the ſacred duties of a nurſe, joined to domeſtic duties, cannot, without much difficulty, be blended

blended with the labours of authorſhip. Yet this is not impoſſible when, like Pauline, a woman has great activity, much method, a plan for the day which nothing can derange, and an incredible facility in writing. But to ſpeak only in general, it may be ſaid that this kind of occupation by no means ſuits young mothers; it is they whom Nature has charged with the attentions ſo neceſſary to early infancy; it is they who are reſponſible for every accident that may happen to thoſe feeble beings entruſted to their care. In the ſequel, tutors and maſters may ſecond and replace them; but who can ſupply the place of a mother about a young child in arms, or beginning to walk? Who can have her vigilance, her foreſight, her quick diſcernment, her conſtant aſſiduity? Pauline will not take this for a criticiſm. What mother is more attentive and more affectionate than ſhe? I know that ſhe never wrote

but

but by the ſide of her child's cradle, when it was aſleep; yet ſhe then broke in upon her own reſt, and, if ſhe was ſuckling, would not this work be attended phyſically with ſome inconvenience? When children have attained the age at which the ideas begin to unfold themſelves, then it is that mothers can with utility cultivate literature; it ſeems to me that their firſt labours ought to be devoted to the education of their children; they know their diſpoſitions, their failings; and the works which they might compoſe for them would be always, for this reaſon, infinitely more uſeful to their family than any other of the ſame kind. An authoreſs, who is a mother, is inexcuſable if ſhe has not written on education and for education; the more eſpecially as morality may be preſented under ſo many different forms that governeſſes are perfectly at liberty to prefer that ſtyle of writing which ſhall pleaſe them the beſt.

In

In the reflections and particular obſervations of a mother, there will always be found ſomething new and ingenious; and even with moderate talents, her works, in many reſpects, will be ſuperior to thoſe of the moſt celebrated authors who have not brought up children. Theſe latter preſent ſyſtems impracticable in the execution; and enlightened and affectionate mothers will propoſe things only the utility of which has been proved to them by experience.

I have always been of opinion that a young woman cannot print her works without departing, in ſome meaſure, from the moſt reſpectable rules of propriety, which make it her duty to obſerve the moſt rigid modeſty. A woman, as long as ſhe is young, ought to be timid and reſerved; ſhe ought to be afraid of *bringing herſelf forward on the ſcene*, of expoſing herſelf to public view: this baſhfulneſs is in itſelf, if not the proof, at leaſt the indication of virtue,

virtue, and it is alſo the moſt ſtriking of its graces:

Quanto ſi moſtra men, tanto è piu bella *.

A young woman would be ridiculous in company, if ſhe there aſſumed a decided tone, if ſhe diſplayed bold opinions, pertinacity, and pretenſions to genius; and much more ſo, if ſhe indulged herſelf in deſcanting on the paſſions and on love. What would it then be to declare herſelf an *authoreſs*? Beſides, men even ought not to write for the public but at a mature age; for, as long as education ſhall not be more improved, the human underſtanding will not be formed till between thirty and forty.

Since the honour of women particularly conſiſts in purity of manners, their writings ought always to preſent the moſt perfect morality. A woman cannot without diſ-

* The leſs ſhe ſhews herſelf, the handſomer ſhe appears. *Taſſo.*

honouring

honouring herſelf proclaim irreligion. Without religion, we may have probity; but there has not yet been ſeen an impious perſon, with warm paſſions, who had any morals. Every one knows the ſpeech of the Marſhal de R****, who, diſguſted all on a ſudden at a woman with whom he was in love, and at the very moment when ſhe appeared ready to grant him every thing, replied to thoſe who aſked him the reaſon of this caprice: "I have "diſcovered that ſhe is an atheiſt, ſo what "ſacrifice would ſhe make me?"

A work written by a woman, and containing irreligious principles, inſpires me for the authoreſs with as much averſion as contempt. Good taſte alone ought to preſerve a woman from ſuch a piece of effrontery.

I remember that in one of my journies, croſſing with St. Méran the waſte lands about Bourdeaux, we ſaw ſome women on enormous ſtilts who were walking thus in theſe vaſt heaths; this ſight ſhocked St. Méran,

ran, who, calling one of theſe women, ſaid to her in a bantering tone: "Pray, Madam, "are not your petticoats very troubleſome "for what you are doing there?" This ſpeech has remained in my mind, and I never ſince met with a woman, who was a *free-thinker*, without being tempted to aſk her the queſtion which St. Méran addreſſed to thoſe *maſculine* and ſhameleſs creatures in the heaths of Bourdeaux.

Mildneſs being one of the attributes of women, all thoſe who write ought to diſtinguiſh themſelves by a ſtyle that particularly requires moderation, taſte, quickneſs, and delicacy. It ſeems to me, that with equal talent, a woman muſt always be ſuperior to a man; for if ſhe reſpect herſelf ever ſo little, ſhe will never indulge in ſcurrility, the tone of ſatire and odious perſonalities. And ſhe who joins principles to good taſte, were ſhe the object of the fouleſt calumnies, will never attack perſons, and will not criticiſe works in a ſarcaſtic

ſarcaſtic manner, except when they are trench on morality and manners. To turn vice into ridicule, and laſh with energy dangerous errors, is the moſt uſeful employment that writers of both ſexes can make of their talents. But I wiſh always, in the beſt grounded criticiſms of an *authoreſs*, to diſcover the delicate hand of the graces; I wiſh to find in them traits of ſenſibility; I wiſh to perceive that the authoreſs enters the liſts neither through malignity, nor to ſatisfy perſonal reſentment, and that ſhe is animated only by the love of order and virtue. I wiſh even, that, in defending the ſacred cauſe of religion and morality, there ſhould be diſtinguiſhed, through her warmeſt indignation, the mildneſs and delicacy which ought to characterize a woman. Her noble and virtuous boldneſs will have the more value; courage in a woman can be intereſting only from its motive, and when it is an effort. This it is that has been felt and expreſſed in a

ſublime

ſublime manner by Paul Veroneſe in his famous picture of Judith; inſtead of painting her under the figure of a fierce amazon, he has repreſented her under the features of a ſimply ingenuous and affecting beauty*. Thus, far from attributing to her character the action which ſhe has juſt committed, the ſpectator feels all that ſuch an action muſt have coſt her. It is neceſſary that every impartial reader ſhould be able to experience a ſentiment of this kind in reading the polemical writings of a woman, and all the criticiſms flowing from a pen that would be for ever polluted by hatred and the deſire of revenge.

Men, in preſenting in their works the picture of the paſſions, may ſpeak of them as having felt them. We are thought well of for having loved paſſionately; a great paſſion always preſerves us from the ſhameful exceſſes of debauchery; and, far from

* I ſaw this picture at Genoa in the Brignolet palace.

diſhonour-

diſhonouring us in the general opinion, it affords a preſumption that our manners cannot have been licentious. But, on the contrary, a violent paſſion, unauthorized by duty, is, in a woman, the almoſt certain proof of a culpable deviation from virtue. So ſhe is deficient in modeſty, reaſon and taſte, when ſhe cauſes it to be underſtood that ſhe has known love, or that ſhe nouriſhes in ſecret an unfortunate paſſion, or deplores the infidelity of a perjured lover, &c. I know ſome productions of women, in which are to be met with theſe ſtrange *confeſſions* very clearly expreſſed; and I can affirm, that in the opinion of men even, they have appeared as ridiculous as indecent. But, perhaps, it will be ſaid, we deſcribe well only what we have felt; women then ſhould never deſcribe love, ſince this would be a tacit avowal of having experienced that paſſion. By no means: I prohibit them in this reſpect nothing but *alluſions* to themſelves, be-

cauſe

cauſe it is ſufficient to have a profound ſenſibility, and to be well acquainted with the human heart, to be enabled to paint in a ſuperior manner all the affections of the ſoul.

" *Nell' anime innocente*
" *Varie non ſon fra loro*
" *Le limpide ſorgenti*
" *D'amore e d'amiſte* *."

Every writer will deſcribe love well, when he knows how to move us in ſpeaking of maternal affection and friendſhip; and the author who expreſſes but coldly thoſe two ſublime ſentiments, will never preſent of love any other than common, dangerous, and fantaſtical pictures.

But I wiſh too, that women would not indulge themſelves in painting love but for the intereſt of morality and manners; they ought to repreſent it ſuch as it is, ever dangerous and frail, and ever incompatible with wiſdom and happineſs.

* The pure ſources of love and friendſhip are the ſame in innocent ſouls. *Metaſtaſio.*

Theſe

Theſe are my principal ideas reſpecting *authoreſſes*, I dare flatter myſelf that they will coincide with yours, and I burn with impatience for next month to arrive, in order to hear the intereſting work of the young *governeſs*, who certainly poſſeſſes all the qualities I could wiſh in an authoreſs, united to talents which I have never ſeen at her age. I know already from Madame de Vordac the title of her laſt work, and that it is compoſed for the purpoſe of forwarding the education of *Maurice and Léocadie*. Happy children! whoſe education can be compared only to that which has been received by *Albert and Pauline!*

Adieu, my friend. Write to me as ſoon as you return from Dijon.

LETTER XX.

From the VISCOUNT DE ST. MÉRAN *to* MONSIEUR DU RESNEL.

Iſle Adam, October 29.

HERE am I, till the 10th of next month, in the moſt agreeable of all the houſes belonging to our princes. Here is not to be ſeen that pomp which is admired at St. Cloud and Chantilli, and which procures no real enjoyment; but here is to be found a real and *ſubſtantial* magnificence, that which can contribute to the agreeableneſs of ſociety; delightful muſic, charming plays, excellent living, great freedom, and carriages and horſes of which every one may diſpoſe at his pleaſure. Add to this, a vaſt caſtle of venerable antiquity, ſtanding

ſtanding in an enchanting ſituation. But the moſt rare ornament of this charming abode is, in my mind, the prince who inhabits it*. This prince, who is well informed without pedantry, and poſſeſſes a conſiderable ſhare of genius, grace, and dignity, is, without exception, (at the period in which I am writing,) the only one of our princes who has no timidity, and who knows how to ſpeak and act up to his character in public; accordingly he enjoys a perſonal conſequence entirely independent of his rank, and to which he is very juſtly entitled: he is faithful in friendſhip; he knows how to chooſe and ſerve his friends; he loves letters, talents, and the arts; he is their moſt ardent and moſt enlightened protector: in ſhort, Nature joining to ſo many gifts that of a charming countenance, as noble as it is mild and regular, ſeems to have formed this prince

* The late Prince de Conti, dead ſeveral years before the revolution.

for the throne, and to reign over Frenchmen; for, with a few of the failings of Henry IV. he has the courage, wit, and affability of that great king, united to the good taſte and the majeſtic deportment of Lewis XIV.

There are a great many people here; among others, Madame de N****, more metaphyſical and more tireſome than ever. It is ſaid that ſhe is writing a book on women; and ſome one mentioning the other day, before Poligni, that Madame de N****, having paſſed all her youth in the faſhionable world, required memory only to exhibit in this work faithful pictures; "By no means," rejoined Poligni; "for a woman who has "been neither ingenuous, nor timid, nor "handſome, has never been young."

I get more and more attached to Poligni; he is an amiable fellow; he was born to love virtue, and, but for his intimacy with the Duke de Roſmond, he would never

have been ſeen on the contemptible liſt of *men of gallantry*. But he has ſincerely renounced his errors; he is ſtill paſſionately in love with Mademoiſelle de Roſmond, and he aſſures me that of all the ſentiments he has hitherto *tried*, that which moſt employs the imagination, and beſt fills the heart, is an unfortunate paſſion. What is your opinion, my worthy friend? Will you anſwer this queſtion?

LETTER XXI.

From the MARCHIONESS *to* MADAME DE VORDAC.

Erneville, January 10.

WELL, my dear friend, that inward peace which I had nearly recovered, that happineſs which I had partly found again, all this has juſt vaniſhed like a dream! Will you

believe it, I am more unhappy than ever? At the end of *three years*, every injurious ſuſpicion is revived; what do I ſay, *ſuſpicion?* no; I am formally accuſed, and I am denied every ſort of explanation. Attend to the account of this inconceivable change.

I received only the day before yeſterday my Léocadie's accuſtomed *new year's gift*. Albert had juſt left me, in order to go and ſee the great pond drawn for fiſh; in the avenue he met with the man who was bringing me this box; he ſtopped him, he queſtioned him, looked at the box, took it, and ſaid that he would deliver it to me himſelf; he turned back, and entered my cabinet, ſaying to me: "Here "ſurely is *Léocadie's new year's gift.*" He ſeemed embarraſſed. I made him eaſy, by appearing to ſee in this quick return nothing more than an obliging attention, and by begging him to help to unpack it. But I have always remarked that

that the arrival of theſe preſents puts him out of humour, and excites in him a curioſity which can only proceed from miſtruſt. He opened the box; we ſaw nothing in it at firſt but children's playthings; Albert, as uſual, handled, turned about, and examined every article with ſcrupulous attention, and all at once we diſcovered a little caſe covered with red morocco. "Oh! oh!" ſaid Albert, "here, no doubt, is ſome "valuable trinket!" In fact, it was a little watch with a chain and a ſeal. The ſeal was very remarkable; it was a carnelion on which was engraved a double *R*; and it was ſet with little rubies in a charming manner. Judge of my aſtoniſhment when, at the moment that Albert caſt his eyes on this ſeal, I ſaw him turn pale..... I looked at him ſtedfaſtly..... He took up the ſeal with a trembling hand; and, after having attentively examined it, he got up ſuddenly, and made an effort to

leave the room; but he fell back in his chair..... The poor fellow could not ſtand..... he ſcarcely breathed; his paleneſs was frightful..... "Great God!" cried I, "Albert, what's the matter with you?"—"O! I wiſh I were dead!".... replied he in a ſmothered voice." .... I threw myſelf into his arms: "Leave me!" ſaid he, "leave me!..... every thing "is cleared up.... I forgive you..... "but leave me!".... I ſcarcely thought of the injuſtice of this freſh accuſation; I ſaw nothing but his paleneſs, his fainting, his ſuffocation. The fright, that I experienced, deprived me even of the ſurpriſe of this ſtrange incident!..... I unbuttoned the collar of his ſhirt; I made him ſmell to ſome ſalts, and, ſtanding up before him, ſupporting his head on my boſom, I bathed his face with a flood of tears! At length he revived; the colour returned to his cheeks; he lifted his eyes towards

towards me, and looked at me with an expreſſion of grief, reproach, and affection ſo pathetic, that I was penetrated and confuſed by it as if I had been guilty. "O! "Pauline!" ſaid he, "inconceivable crea- "ture!" ..... and his tears interrupted his ſpeech..... At that moment we heard a noiſe; he conjured me to compoſe myſelf; he got up, and quitted me abruptly, on perceiving Mademoiſelle du Rocher. I remained motionleſs and petrified. At the expiration of a few minutes, I left the cabinet in order to look for him; I firſt went to his room, and not finding him there, I interrogated the ſervants. They told me that he was not in the houſe, and I immediately proceeded up the avenue. It was eleven o'clock in the morning. I in vain rambled over the banks of the pond, and the walks of the little wood. During this uſeleſs ſearch I was in a violent agitation, which

exerciſe and impatience ſeemed to increaſe at every ſtep. I ran, I called; and the phyſical emotion excited by fatigue, joined to inquietude and the ſtrangeſt confuſion of ideas, occaſioned me a ſort of inexpreſſible giddineſs, the moſt painful ſituation that I ever experienced in my life. I had nothing on but a plain lawn gown; I walked over the ſnow and ice; and, far from perceiving the cold, I was in a burning heat! ..... I had conſtantly before my eyes the pale and fainting figure of Albert; this image inſpired me with a vague idea, but as fatal as extravagant, which became more diſtinct as the time ſlipped away. In paſſing through the gate that leads to the encloſure of the wood, my gown caught in one of the poſts. As I was ſtill running, it ſeemed to me that ſome one behind ſtopped me, which, in the diſorder I was in, threw me into a fright impoſſible to be deſcribed. I ſprang forward, tearing, by

this

this effort, my gown from top to bottom; I ſlipped on the ice, and I fell down, at the diſtance of ten yards, on a ſtump of a tree which occaſioned me two pretty conſiderable wounds, the one in my chain, (for I fell on my face,) and the other in my right hand, the ſkin of which the ſharp points of the wood tore dreadfully; my blood flowed, and I was ſeveral minutes without being able to get up. At laſt I crept along towards *my tree*, in order to ſit down a moment on the ſeat, for I was exhauſted by fatigue. I fixed myſelf without reflection on this ſeat covered with ſnow: I no longer hardly knew what I was doing; I felt chilled with cold; an univerſal ſhivering ſeemed to have calmed the effervescence of my ideas; my imagination no longer preſented me any thing; yet the ſight of *my tree* cauſed me a diſagreeable ſenſation: I no longer thought; but I ſtill felt, and continued to

ſuffer. I was in this ſituation, which would have become mortal had it been prolonged, when I heard loud and repeated ſhouts re-echo on all ſides; this noiſe inſpired me with no idea; I was totally benumbed, my eyes were cloſed, and I had ſcarcely any ſenſe remaining.....

It was Albert, who, followed by ſeveral ſervants, was, in his turn, ſeeking me. You may judge of his ſurpriſe and his fright, when he perceived me in the ſituation which I have juſt deſcribed, ſeated and motionleſs, with my head leaning againſt the trunk of *my tree*, my face pale and diſfigured, my eyes ſhut, and my hair in diſorder, and my clothes torn and bloody. .... He gave a piercing cry, and flew to me; I recognized him, and experienced a mechanical movement of joy, but it was ſo ſudden, that the palpitation of my heart revived in an inſtant the impeded circulation of my blood. He pulled off his great coat in order to cover me with it; and,

after

after having well wrapped me up, he took me in his arms to carry me to the caſtle, which, as you know, is only five hundred yards from this place. He would not ſuffer his ſervants to aſſiſt him in carrying me; and, notwithſtanding the burden with which he was loaded, he outſtripped them all, for he walked with an inconceivable rapidity. During this ſhort trip I recovered all my ſenſes, but not my memory; I was ſo ſtupified and aſtoniſhed that I could not recollect what had paſſed on this cruel morning; the only idea I retained of it was, that I had made Albert uneaſy; but I was in his arms, I was looking at him ſtedfaſtly with delight; and, far from ſuffering, I was happy. In croſſing the great veſtibule of the caſtle we met Léocadie, who, on ſeeing me, gave ſome painful cries, which found their way to the very bottom of my heart. Albert gave orders for her to be taken away, and ſhe diſ-

diſappeared, although I earneſtly aſked for her.....

Having reached my room, I was put to bed; I was made to drink ſome wine; I was rubbed with warm cloths; my two wounds were dreſſed, and, in the courſe of an hour, I found myſelf ſo well, that, having perfectly recovered my ſenſes, and unfortunately my memory too, I was enabled to relate what had happened to me in the wood. Then I would get up; this Albert formally oppoſed; he conjured me to paſs the reſt of the day in bed. I conſented; but at the ſame time I diſmiſſed my women, in order to be again alone with him; he was dreadfully afraid of this *tête-à-tête*, rightly ſuſpecting that I ſhould require an explanation; in fact, as ſoon as we were by ourſelves, I ſpoke to him of the fatal ſeal which had occaſioned all this confuſion. Albert gave a forced ſmile; and, taking my hand, which he ſqueezed affectionately between his,

"My

" My dearly-beloved Pauline," ſaid he to me, " forget this extravagant ſcene, and " let us never ſpeak of it."—" Me, forget " it?" interrupted I, " forget thoſe words " pronounced by Albert: *O! I wiſh I* " *were dead! every thing is cleared up!* " *I forgive you.*" .... " Well," rejoined he, " I was mad; I acknowledge my folly, " what would you more?"—" The truth." —" I tell it you, I confeſs that I was out " of my ſenſes."—" No, I know you; you " may be deceived, I know it but too well; " but you are not fanciful: you wiſh to " conceal from me an injurious opinion, " and I wiſh to juſtify myſelf."—" I do " not accuſe you."—" You ſuſpect me " however."—" I love you more than " ever."—" And yet you no longer eſteem " me!" ..... We had proceeded thus far in this dialogue, when the little door at the ſide of my bed opened; I heard through my curtains, which were drawn, ſomething ſliding ſoftly along my bed; it was Léocadie eſcaped from the hands of Mademoiſelle

moiſelle du Rocher; ſhe advanced into the middle of the room, and perceiving Albert, ſhe fell on her knees, ſaying, "Forgive me, papa!..... I wiſh to ſee "mamma!"..... This charming child then melted into tears; ſhe had her little hands joined, and her ſupplicating look would have ſoftened even the hardeſt heart..... Albert, exceedingly moved, got up, and put her on my bed; he then ſurveyed us both alternately, as if he wiſhed to compare our two faces. "Albert," ſaid I to him, with a little vexation, "don't you find ſome likeneſs between "our features?"—"No," anſwered he, "it is not *you that ſhe is like.*" At theſe words I felt that I coloured, which made me colour more, and I was totally diſconcerted. Thus it is that every thing turns againſt me. However, reſuming the converſation: "I ſee," ſaid I to him, "that "you have been told of a likeneſs which "I ſhall not deny."—"Yes, ſhe is like "the

" the Duke de Roſmond." ..... This name made me ſhudder. " Indeed," continued I, " all thoſe Grecian faces reſemble " each other, like all the antique ſtatues " that are in this ſtyle of beauty; at " Autun was not the Duke de Roſmond " thought to reſemble Madame d'El ***, " whoſe face is ſo like the heads of Nio- " be; and Léocadie having the ſame caſt " of countenance, reſembles Madame " d'El *** and the Duke de Roſ- " mond."—" No doubt, my dear Pau- " line," rejoined Albert. He pronounced this *no doubt* with a tone in which we ſpeak to children whom we do not wiſh to thwart. I felt at once humbled, ſhocked, and as angry as I can be with him, and I was unable to reſtrain my tears. Léocadie then began to weep again; I preſſed her with tranſport againſt my boſom, ſaying, " O! my child! don't cry; you who ought " to conſole me! if you afflict me too, what " hand will wipe away my tears?" .....

" Ah!

"Ah! always mine!" exclaimed Albert; "always mine! Whatever may be the "cauſe of your grief, my heart will par- "ticipate in it; I ſhall always ſuffer with "you, and more than you!" In pro- nouncing theſe words with the moſt tender and the moſt affecting feeling, he took Léocadie into his arms: "O! you," ſaid he, "whom ſhe fondly loves, can you not "be dear to me!..... Yes; I love you "too! yes, my whole life ſhall prove "it!".....

He ſpoke with that enthuſiaſm which comes from the heart; and at that moment, penetrated by the moſt profound gratitude, I had no expreſſions to deſcribe what I felt; I could have wiſhed to be at his feet..... He harbours freſh ſuſpicions; or, to ſpeak more correctly, he thinks him- ſelf certain of my infidelity; and yet what reſpect for a woman whom he believes ſo culpable! what tenderneſs! what gene- roſity! He ſays to himſelf, no doubt, that

a lapſe

a lapſe of three years has expiated this crime.....He does not allow himſelf the ſhadow of a reproach; he is miſtruſtful, he is unjuſt; but what ſenſibility! what greatneſs of ſoul! So then, in inſulting me, he has found the ſecret of ſoftening me, and of attaching me more cloſely to him by his very injuſtice!.....

You may well ſuppoſe that I did every thing in my power to obtain an explanation, but in vain; he proteſts to me that it is the cypher on the ſeal, the double *R*, that ſtruck him at the firſt moment, fooliſhly he adds, becauſe the Duke de Roſmond's name is *Romuald Roſmond*, which, he ſaid, he learnt *by chance* at Autun, and of which I was ignorant. And here again is a ſingular coincidence; but I by no means believe that this little circumſtance cauſed the ſituation in which I ſaw him, the more eſpecially as it was before he had examined the impreſſion; and it was at the mere ſight of the ſeal that he

he became confuſed and turned pale..... But how can this ſeal appear a proof ſo formal, ſo poſitive!..... This is inconceivable..... I will not ceaſe to queſtion him, to perſecute him, till he has diſcovered to me this incomprehenſible myſtery; but, if he is perſuaded that, in revealing it to me, I ſhould be confounded, and under the impoſſibility of juſtifying myſelf, he will perſiſt in being ſilent, and then in what a ſtrange and diſconſolate ſituation ſhall I be? Innocent, and judged guilty, without being able to obtain an explanation, and yet forced to diſcover in that injuſtice a ſublime goodneſs, and a generoſity worthy of admiration!.....

I am going to write all theſe particulars to my mother, in order that ſhe may join her entreaties to mine; perhaps ſhe will obtain what he refuſes to me.....

Adieu, my friend. I am in good health to-day, which is ſurpriſing, after all that I have ſuffered. My chin is almoſt well; the

the hurt in my hand was more conſiderable; but it does not prevent me from writing, although it is with difficulty that I hold my pen. I even know not whether you will be able to make out this frightful ſcrawl. Adieu, my dear friend; tell me what you think of all this.

LETTER XXII.

From the ſame to the ſame.

Erneville, February 15.

ALBERT is ſtill at Dijon, my dear friend, and he will not return till next Monday. He has perfectly perſuaded my mother that the ſtory of the ſeal was nothing more than the ſurpriſe occaſioned him by this *coincidence of cyphers*. My mother ſcolds me on this account, and tells me that I form chimeras to afflict myſelf. But I am ſure,

ſure, as I am of my exiſtence, that there is ſomething very extraordinary, which Albert wiſhes abſolutely to conceal: it is true, however, as you obſerve, that theſe two *R*'s are in fact very ſingular. We were already ſo aſtoniſhed at the firſt *R* that was on the medallion, and now here are two; and this *vile man*'s name muſt be *Romuald*, a chriſtian name ſo uncommon; and Albert muſt know it. See how he has informed himſelf of what concerns him. Neither was he ignorant of the likeneſs.....

I have been told a pretty ſtory which has been made about me, and which I learnt from Madame Regnard. Imagine that it was reported at Luzi, that there were in Léocadie's laſt *new year's gift* a complete caſket of jewels for me, girandoles of diamonds, an aigrette, bracelets, &c. which Albert thought a little *beyond the mark*, as Madame Regnard ſays; he forbad me to wear this finery, I got angry, Albert flew into a paſſion, and the

diſpute

diſpute became ſo violent, that Albert threw the caſket at my head, and this is the way I came by the hurt in my face.

It ſeems that this ſtory was invented by a footman; but I am almoſt certain that it is of the compoſition of the Chevalier de Celtas, for he was at Luzi at the time when there was the firſt whiſper of this tale, which, however, paſſes for the moſt poſitive truth at Luzi, among all the ladies whoſe company I have not courted, and whom I have had the bad taſte not to attract to Erneville. Worthy Madame Regnard defends me as well as ſhe can, if not with eloquence, at leaſt with ſincere zeal. She ſays that the clamour which ſhe ſees againſt me *turns her blood*, and ſhe is very much aſtoniſhed at my philoſophy in this reſpect.

The moſt abſurd calumnies have a wonderful ſucceſs, when they are levelled at a perſon who is envied in ſecret. O! I ought indeed to excite the envy of thoſe who

who are ſuſceptible of this frightful ſentiment! I was ſo perfectly happy!..... and now!.....Ah! how much I am to be pitied!..... Yet, ſhall I tell it to you, this character ſo great, ſo generous, which Albert diſplays, is a conſolation to me! I am quite loſt in his opinion; but, notwithſtanding his cruel error, I can ſtill admire him!..... In ſhort, a ſecret preſentiment aſſures me, that, in time, I ſhall ſucceed in juſtifying myſelf completely. Innocence has the happy privilege of never loſing hope. O! if mine be realized!..... how I ſhall enjoy ſuch a happineſs, both for Albert's ſake and for yours, my friend! .....I will not ſay *for my mother's*; ſhe has never ſuſpected her Pauline.

LETTER XXIII.

From the CHEVALIER DE CELTAS *to* MONSIEUR D'ORGEVAL.

April 12.

YOUR brother ſet out yeſterday for Auvergne. On what occaſion?—you will aſk me. To go and *gather ſimples* on the *Mont d'or*. The poor man can no longer be quiet any where. The *family* is in much greater confuſion than ever. There was a boiſterous ſcene two days before the departure of the great Albert. Mademoiſelle du Rocher and Jacinthe abuſed one another finely, in preſence of the Marquis and Marchioneſs; the latter ſiding with du Rocher, and wiſhing to impoſe ſilence on Jacinthe; the maid, irritated, ſaid to her

in ſo many words: "*Faith, Madam, after all that I know, and all that I have ſeen, you ought not to drive me to extremities.*" On this, Pauline, in a rage, inſtantly diſcharged her. Jacinthe ſet off in high ſpirits for *Bourbon-Lancy*, where ſhe intends, ſhe ſays, to live *on her fortune*. I knew already that ſhe had lodged ſome money at Luzi in *Beaudot*'s hands; I learnt this by chance, and I have mentioned it only to yourſelf. But all things come to light in the long run; and you may well ſuppoſe that it will be readily gueſſed by *what means* Mademoiſelle Jacinthe has made this fortune.

I arrived the day before yeſterday at poor old Dupui's, whom I find in better health. Your little Zéphyrine is an aſtoniſhing girl, for a child of fifteen months old. She has not the *Grecian* beauty of the wonderful Léocadie; but ſhe is charming.

Adieu,

Adieu, my dear fellow; if you return before the ſecond of next month, you will find me ſtill here; I ſhall be mortified to go without having ſeen you.

LETTER XXIV.

From MONSIEUR BEAUDOT *to the* MARQUIS D'ERNEVILLE.

Luzi, April 20.

MONSIEUR LE MARQUIS,

SOME perſons of conſequence and judgment have adviſed me to inform you of two facts which appear ſuſpicious, and which you alone can clear up. A woman of the name of Jacinthe Hébert, the Marchioneſs's maid, lodged in our hands, about three years ago, the ſum of thirty ſeven louis d'or, and, a few months after, ſhe brought us five hundred livres more.

Beſides, one Pinault, called la France, ſervant to the Marchioneſs, alſo lodged in our hands, about fifteen months ago, the ſum of three hundred livres: and he again returned ſix weeks ſince to lodge with us twenty-two piſtoles. This ſurpriſed me: I aſked him how he could ſave ſuch ſums out of country wages? He appeared embarraſſed, and anſwered me that this money came from a private penſion which the Marchioneſs gave him unknown to you, and that not a word muſt be ſaid of it. But it having been ſuggeſted to me, that theſe people might probably have acquired this money by domeſtic theſts, I have thought it my duty to inform you of the particulars.

I am, with reſpect,

Monſieur le Marquis,

Your moſt obedient, &c.

LETTER XXV.

The MARQUIS's *Anſwer.*

Clermont, April 24.

I KNOW Jacinthe has the ſum of thirty-ſeven louis which you mention to me, as well as the five hundred livres. With reſpect to La France, he of my ſervants whom I like the beſt, I am alſo apprized of his having the money which he has very properly lodged in your hands. I am not, on that account, the leſs grateful for the kindneſs which induced you to write to me on this occaſion. I know how to appreciate the motive of this obliging ſtep.

I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER XXVI.

From the ſame to MONSIEUR DU RESNEL.

May 6.

BANISH your fears, my friend, my journey is the moſt natural thing in the world. Do not make yourſelf uneaſy reſpecting the reports that are ſpread at Luzi, Bourbon-Lancy, &c. I am not aſtoniſhed that the accident which happened to Pauline in the wood, and then the diſmiſſion of an inſolent *femme-de-chambre* ſhould have produced ſo many falſe conjectures and ſo many calumnious ſtories. Some are made every day on ſmaller foundations. Let the fooliſh, the idle, and the envious, talk; but believe me, nothing can prevent me from doing perfect juſtice to the angel whom heaven has given me for a wife.

As

As an amateur paſſionately fond of natural hiſtory, and botany in particular, I had long ſince had a wiſh to make an excurſion to Auvergne. I have viſited Holland and Switzerland, and I was not acquainted with Auvergne which adjoins to the province where I reſide; this is the more unpardonable, as I can aſſure you with truth, that the places, over which I am now rambling, afford the moſt curious phenomena and the moſt enchanting ſights of every kind. The peaſants of Switzerland are happy, but clowniſh, and rather ſavage; thoſe in Holland are prodigiouſly rich. The true glory of governments conſiſts in the opulence of the people. The riches of perſons of this claſs preſent a picture which we always contemplate with pleaſure, becauſe it is a proof of good laws; and, beſides, theſe fortunes, always lawfully acquired, are the honourable fruits of a virtuous conduct, as well as of induſtry and labour. The peaſants of Sar-

dam and Brouk* poſſeſs habitations, dazzling from their refined cleanlineſs and the extraordinary luxury by which they are embelliſhed; but, in truth, this oſtentation is puerile, and diſplays bad taſte. Theſe peaſants ſpend prodigious ſums in gewgaws, and, nevertheleſs, live with a frugality bordering even upon parſimony; ſo true it is, that the rage for luxury, in whatever condition it may be, is always blended with avarice, and conſequently excludes beneficence.

Our peaſants of Auvergne live in abundance, and have no ſort of oſtentation; in this province are to be met with ſeveral communities of peaſants extremely rich; among others, near the town of Thiers, the Pinons, an ancient family of huſbandmen ſettled for upwards of four hundred years paſt on the ſummit of a mountain. This family (reckoning the children and

* Villages in Holland.

the

the ſervants) is compoſed of upwards of two hundred individuals. Theſe reſpectable huſbandmen have a ſpacious dwelling in an admirable ſituation, but built in a ſtyle of patriarchal ſimplicity. They have no other luxury than that of nature, numerous herds and flocks, a capital dairy, flowers, fruits, and all the productions of the moſt fertile ſoil in great abundance. The urbanity of theſe peaſants is remarkable; their ſimplicity has nothing vulgar; it is that of nature; their hoſpitality revives the remembrance of the firſt ages of the world. I ſpent a whole day at their houſe. In the evening, before I went away, I counted in one of their barns fourteen poor people who were to paſs the night there; a ſupper had been given them, and their wallets were filled with bread. Theſe ſentiments of kindneſs and charity are to be found in all the cottages of this province; theſe people, the moſt humane on earth, are alſo the moſt religious. All

the houſes of the peaſants, without exception, are ornamented with a croſs; and this revered emblem of religion is to be ſeen in all the rooms which they inhabit. Every where prayers are ſaid in common twice a day, and with an affecting ſerenity and fervour. The aſpect of the villages is not here brilliant as in Holland; but it pleaſes me much more. All the cottages, built with brick, have flat roofs and an extraordinary look of elegance. There is a general taſte of proportions and forms, which I have ſeen no where among peaſants. Their carts reſemble antique cars; in them are placed white or crimſon carpets to hang over the ſides; people ſit in theſe carts lengthwiſe, which is extremely graceful. The inhabitants here are handſome, and have very fine complexions; the dreſs of the country girls is ſo agreeable and ſo elegant, that I have purchaſed a complete ſuit, which I intended for Pauline. Add to this, a delightful climate,

nature

nature in her moſt agreeable mood, and the moſt diverſified and moſt pictureſque land-ſcapes. The land is ſo fertile, eſpecially in the environs of Clermont, that no attention is paid to the expoſure to the ſun; the inhabitants may plant at random, every thing comes to maturity; and indeed apricot-trees in the open air are to be ſeen, growing and producing ripe fruit, under the ſhade of lofty trees which overlook and cover them. To-day I ſpent the whole morning on the mountain of Royat; what reputation would this mountain have among us, if it were in Switzerland or England! And our French travellers do not know it even by name! This mountain, which is exceſſively high, is crowned by a majeſtic grotto covered with rocks, flowers, verdure and ſhrubs; for, here, the trees grow and rear their heads through the clifts of the rocks. The enormous mouth of the cavern admits of its inſide being ſeen; it is full of an infinite number

of beautiful caſcades, whoſe pure and limpid water, falling from the ſides that are on a ſlope, unites in the middle, hollowed out to receive it, and forms a copious rivulet, which, iſſuing with impetuoſity from the grotto, ruſhes throughout the whole extent of the mountain, ſometimes meandering ſoftly on the turf, ſometimes daſhing againſt the rocks, and thence rebounding in caſcades. In ſhort, this torrent at the foot of the mountain divides itſelf into a thouſand little canals, which, in their courſe, fertilize the fields and meadows that ſurround the town of Clermont.

As for natural curioſities, no province affords ſo many as Auvergne. This is a charming excurſion; but I much regret having made it alone; ſolitary admiration is a very imperfect pleaſure.

It is an illuſion of pride, or at leaſt a great error, to imagine that we can find, within ourſelves, that which is ſufficient for our happineſs; unleſs abſorbed in extreme

treme piety, man will always be miſerable in abſolute ſolitude. Very exalted religious ſentiments muſt give a taſte for profound retirement: and, indeed, in a Chartreux, who is very fervent, and who finds himſelf happy, there is nothing that aſtoniſhes me; but philoſophy alone will never inſpire this perfect indifference *. It is eaſy not to regret the world when we have been well acquainted with it; yet

* The truth of the maxim, here laid down by Madame de Genlis, is not to be diſputed. Our fair countrywomen will not, we hope, think us too officious, if we recall to their remembrance the ſame ſentiments, expreſſed in elegant verſe.

" No bandit fierce, no tyrant mad with pride,
" No cavern'd hermit, reſts ſelf-ſatisfied:
" Who moſt to ſhun or hate mankind pretend,
" Seek an admirer, or would fix a friend:
" Abſtract what others feel, what others think,
" All pleaſures ſicken, and all glories ſink.

POPE's *Eſſay on Man*, EPIST. iv. l. 41.

Might not their favourite poet, to his "*cavern'd hermit*" have, with equal propriety, added the *cloiſter'd nun?*—*Tranſlator's Note.*

it

it is impoſſible to diſpenſe with all ſociety. We enjoy well only what we ſhare; the greateſt of our pleaſures is to communicate our thoughts, our opinions, our ſenſations. This pleaſure, which ariſes principally from the wiſh to gain approbation, is the only uſeful ſentiment produced by ſelf-love. Man has leſs need of a ſupport than of a companion; thus, even when betrayed by love or friendſhip, he is found to renounce all his affections, a powerful tie ſtill attaches him to mankind: his heart has no more ſecrets to reveal to them; but he ſtill finds a conſoling charm in imparting to them his ideas, and in complaining to them of themſelves. For my part, far from having to *complain* of *my lot*, I cannot but be well ſatisfied with it; in ſix weeks I ſhall ſet out to join you with that lively and pure joy which I always feel on finding myſelf again at Gilly or Erneville.

Adieu, my friend; my compliments to the Baron and his amiable conſort.

LETTER XXVII.

From the MARCHIONESS *to the* MARQUIS.

May 20.

MONSIEUR du Reſnel was ſo delighted with your letter that he communicated it to the Baron, who kept it ſeveral days; and then the Baroneſs ſent it to me, thinking that I ſhould find in it all that can diſſipate my uneaſineſs. But the peruſal of it has made no change in my opinion. I know you, Albert; you wrote this letter in order to perſuade our friends that you are perfectly happy. You will never complain of me, I know; you will never accuſe Pauline. You are generous; but you are deceived; you indulge in ſecret a fatal error; you think me guilty, and I am innocent!

nocent!..... This journey ſo ſuddenly undertaken, this precipitate departure, (and the day after the *diſmiſſion of Jacinthe*,) this ſtay of two months in Auvergne, are theſe natural things? Can you hope to perſuade me of it? No; the inſolent calumny of a *femme-de-chambre*, hurried away by her anger; that odious ſpeech made the ſtrongeſt impreſſion on you; although, afterwards, ſhe owned that, in ſpeaking thus, ſhe had loſt her ſenſes. You ſaw her repentance; you heard her recantation; you ſaw me, with inflexibility, diſcharge her, notwithſtanding her tears and entreaties; but your ſick mind was ſtruck; nothing has been able to efface the firſt impreſſion, and you ſet out the next day!

Do not flatter yourſelf with changing my opinion; Albert, in the name of your affection for me, (alas! I dare not ſay in the name of mine; you no longer rely on it,) in the name of all that is dear to you, explain

plain yourſelf frankly! Unveil the myſtery of that fatal ſeal!..... Juſt heaven! you think ſtill that Léocadie..... I cannot finiſh!..... This idea is a thouſand times more injurious now, than it was at firſt. Theſe anonymous preſents are then nothing more than artifices concerted with me! But, whatever appearances may be, whatever may be the fatal ſports of chance, can you think me capable of ſuch duplicity, of ſuch monſtrous effrontery?..... And can you have ſo much reſpect for a woman ſo criminal? No; if I were what you ſuppoſe me, your plan of indulgence and kindneſs would be but a degrading weakneſs! We may forgive a *faux pas* expiated by repentance; but this perſevering impoſture would merit only the moſt profound indignation of a virtuous heart. Yet you do not believe, you cannot believe that Pauline is the vileſt of women! Singular coincidence, and an unheard-of concourſe of circumſtances, aſtoniſh and

confound

confound your reaſon without perſuading your heart. That heart, always mine, diſavows the doubts of your mind; a frightful perplexity robs you of your repoſe; when you ſee me, when you liſten to me, you think me innocent; you then reproach yourſelf for your injurious ſuſpicions, which revive when you reflect on the united appearances that ſpeak againſt me. Thus tormented, torn by a thouſand contrary ſentiments, afflicted alternately by miſtruſt and remorſe, you paſs your life in accuſing and acquitting me. It is time that this ſituation ſhould be at an end. Do you think you ſuffer alone? No; ſince you cannot conceal from me your ſufferings. Speak then; your ſilence and your diſſimulation kill me..... This cruel reſerve cannot impoſe on me; it can ſerve only to *drive me mad.* Albert, I conjure you on my knees, explain to me the enigma of the ſeal, and conſider that I ſhall not ceaſe to perſecute you on this ſubject.

LETTER XXVIII.

The MARQUIS's *Anſwer.*

At the Mill of the Mountain of Royat, May 29.

O! WHO can reſiſt you! You inſiſt on it; come then, I will open to you this agitated heart, in which you ſo well know how to read, at a time even when it wiſhes to be impenetrable. Pauline!..... O! firſt and dear object of my moſt tender affections, I have more than one myſtery to reveal to you!..... For a long time paſt a *particular ſecret* hangs heavy on my mind!..... It ſeems to me that I owe to you this confeſſion, though I muſt acquaint you with a fact which appears to accuſe you..... Yet this confidence is repugnant to my principles; but ſpeak, do you inſiſt on it? I will obey you.

As

As for this ſeal, ſince you require it with ſo much perſeverance, I will then explain to you the real cauſe of the trouble in which you have ſeen me.

A few days after my arrival at Paris, I went to a jeweller's to make a purchaſe of ſome trinkets for you. I ſaw in his ſhop this very ſeal; I had a mind to buy it for you; the jeweller told me that he could not ſell it to me, becauſe it belonged to the *Duke de Roſmond*, who had brought it to him in order to have reſet two little rubies that had been detached from it. I then beſpoke a ſeal exactly like it, with the exception of the impreſſion; for I ordered your cypher and mine to be engraved on the ſtone. This ſeal was made, and ſet in the ſame manner; but it was not abſolutely like the other; it was at leaſt as large again. I thought that it would not be proper for a woman, and I kept it for myſelf. Six weeks after, being in a great crowd on coming out of the play-houſe,

houſe, I was robbed of my watch, and thus I loſt this ſeal which was hanging to it. But having worn it for nearly two months, I have retained ſo clear an idea of the manner in which it was ſet, and the arrangement of the ſtones, that it is impoſſible for me to be miſtaken reſpecting the ſeal that ſerved as a model for making it, and, beſides, bore theſe very letters, which in fact, form the Duke de Roſmond's cypher.

This is the whole truth; you may now conceive the impreſſion that, at the firſt moment, muſt have been made on me by this ſingular incident, added to ſo many others equally ſtrange! Believe me, dear Pauline! no one can be more ingenious than I am in ſeeking for every thing that can ſimplify theſe unlucky effects of chance. It appears to me, beyond all doubt, that the Duke de Roſmond is the father of Léocadie; the perfect likeneſs and the preſent of the ſeal are poſitive and

certain proofs. But who is this child's mother? It is not a *Pariſian*.....I have well calculated the time and the periods. At the moment of the ſeduction of which Léocadie is the fruit, the Duke was concealed in the environs of *Erneville!* .....However, the time of a pregnancy cannot be calculated with preciſion, becauſe the term of it may be advanced by ſome accident. The Duke, on quitting thoſe environs, went to Autun. I thought that it might be poſſible for Léocadie's mother to be in that town: but not one of the women, who are ſaid to have intrigued with the Duke, has been to Paris, or has travelled!..... Can it be ſuppoſed that a Paris woman came, at this period, into Burgundy, and ſaw the Duke in private? This ſuppoſition is hardly probable; the Duke is ſo conceited, ſo indiſcreet, that he would have boaſted of it: beſides, it is almoſt impoſſible for a Paris lady to be *incog.* in a ſmall country town. In ſhort,

the

the Duke reſided at Autun at Monſieur de ***'s; all eyes were open on him; all his proceedings were known. Shall we imagine that the mother of the child was only a girl of the lower claſs belonging to the town of Autun, whoſe obſcurity concealed her from every eye? Still this humble intrigue would have been known; but, ſuppoſing that it had not, would the Duke have annexed ſo much importance to the education and exiſtence of a child brought into the world by ſuch a perſon? How too, account for the ſuborning of Le Maire and his ſuddenly diſappearing? He was attached to me; it muſt have required no trifling ſum to corrupt him!..... Jacinthe was his miſtreſs, and was inceſſantly writing to him..... It was after having received a letter from Jacinthe that he aſked my leave to remain in Paris!.... How explain all this? Jacinthe has been bought too, ſhe has received preſents, others have alſo received money..... All this,

this, without reckoning the conſiderable diſburſements made for Léocadie, muſt have coſt an enormous ſum. It is ſaid that the Duke, though full of oſtentations, is naturally avaricious, and that his affairs are exceedingly deranged; he muſt then have had very powerful motives for ſquandering ſo much money, and for combining intrigues of ſo complicated a nature. ..... And why ſo much pains, ſo much trouble, ſo much expenſe, in order that his daughter may be brought up at Erneville caſtle, and be himſelf deprived of her for ever?

There has occurred to me on this ſubject a ſtrange thought; I have ſaid to myſelf that, through conceit and reſentment, the Duke has burdened Pauline with his child, in order that ſhe might be thought the mother of it, and to he revenged for her cruelty. But, in good earneſt, can any one dwell on ſo extravagant an idea? I do not believe that he has attached his fame,

as

as a man of gallantry, to the opinion of the inhabitants of Autun and Luzi; he requires a larger theatre; and, beſides, could ſelf-conceit alone inſpire ſuch combinations and a plan ſo ſyſtematic?.....I own to you, in the labyrinth out of which I cannot find my way, tired of looking in vain for a clue that can extricate me, I am ſometimes tempted to admit the only ſuppoſition that can explain every thing; but, then even, I do not accuſe you of a *perſevering* impoſture. Theſe anonymous preſents are, I think, made without your knowledge, without your conſe nt, and even againſt your will: what means could you find to prevent them?.....I believe that your wiſh would have been to break off all intercourſe, even indirect, with a ſeducer; but, that it is he who perſiſts in preſerving with you this ſort of tie, this forced correſpondence..... This is what I imagine, when my reaſon yields to the illuſion of ſo many apparent proofs.....

I proteſt to you that, in my greateſt fits of miſtruſt, I have never felt a moment's anger againſt you; one cannot know the natural purity of your mind, and ſuſpect you of a weakneſs without pitying you; in this ſuppoſition you appear to me ſo unfortunate, I think your fault ſo well expiated, that I cannot but be ſoftened. But, great God! what a command over myſelf has it required, to repreſs my too juſt reſentment againſt the abhorred author of my troubles!..... how frequently have I been tempted to ſeek him out, in order to thruſt my ſword into his heart!..... Diſpel your alarms; I could not revenge myſelf without diſhonouring you, without myſelf confirming, and for ever, the calumnies by which you are blackened. Ah! make yourſelf eaſy: could hatred prevail in my heart over my affection for you?.....In ſhort, to open my mind completely to you, I muſt make you another ſtrange confeſſion..... Will you believe

believe it, Pauline? doubt, miſtruſt, and jealouſy, have given my ſentiments for you all the characterics of paſſion: I do not love you better; but I love you with more violence; I ſee you by turns under different forms..... ſometimes the victim of an unfortunate paſſion, reproved by duty and combated by remorſe, intereſting from your regret, engaging from the union of a diſpoſition, timid and full of candour, with an audacious conduct, and the moſt ingenious artifices; and ſometimes under your real form, under the heavenly features of an angel of innocence and purity; then you appear to me as ſublime as affecting; I adore you in lamenting my injuſtice; I find myſelf unworthy of you; I feel that I deſerve your hatred, and, above all, your contempt; I attribute only to your virtue the marks of your affection, and I ſink into deſpair. Know all the extravagances of which I am capable! At all times I would give my life to acquire

the complete certainty of your innocence; and yet I am leſs profoundly unhappy when I think you guilty!..... Then, at leaſt, I can flatter myſelf with appearing to you indulgent and generous; then it ſeems to me that I acquire new rights over your heart..... Ah! believe me, pride has no ſhare whatever in this ſort of enjoyment. To be loved by you, that is my ſole wiſh. To be able to admire you beyond meaſure; to be able to place you in my imagination above all other women, all created beings, that is my ſupreme glory!..... Now I can reconcile theſe two ſentiments! I ſay to myſelf, I repeat to myſelf inceſſantly: If Pauline went aſtray for a moment, ſhe is almoſt a woman of the common ſtamp; if ſhe is innocent, I am a barbarous and ungrateful wretch; I have miſtaken, I have calumniated what I love! O! Pauline, you ſee with what frankneſs I diſcover to you the moſt ſecret receſſes of my heart; ah!

if

if you could imitate this example! Tell me with ſincerity if, at leaſt, you love me as much as before the period of our miſfortunes?..... No, I cannot believe it, you eſteem me no longer!..... And yet you know not all my faults!... No matter, I will, if you inſiſt on it, complete this paniful confidence; my ſoul, agitated and torn, cannot find a ſhadow of repoſe, but in pouring itſelf out without reſerve into yours. Ah! If you loved me as I love you, how little would it coſt you to forgive me!..... The moſt inſupportable of my torments is to perſuade myſelf that I have almoſt entirely loſt your affection. At leaſt I am certain of no longer holding the firſt place in it. Maurice, Léocadie, and your mother, are thoſe whom you really cheriſh..... I own to you, I am no longer ſatisfied with your friendſhip..... or, to ſpeak more correctly, it is no longer ſufficient for me!..... Fool that I am, I would have love; and *that* you will never

feel for me!.... What! Pauline, our ſouls, ſo cloſely united from our infancy, no longer correſpond, no longer underſtand each other! ..... You will never experience that with which you inſpire me! Henceforth the expreſſion of my real ſentiments can only aſtoniſh you, and perhaps diſpleaſe you; you no longer ſhare them!.... I ſhall love alone, (for can friendſhip repay love?) I ſhall love alone, and without hope!..... And how to cure myſelf; I neither can nor will fly from you; we are linked to each other by chains which we muſt not break, nor even looſen!..... O! how I regret that quiet and pure ſentiment which ſo long conſtituted my happineſs! yet my affection for you was always more warm and more anxious than yours; what do I ſay? Ah! I have always loved you paſſionately; and you—you have never had for me any other than the ſentiments of a ſiſter!.....

I will no longer deny it, my dear Pauline, I was out of my ſenſes when I left Erne-

Erneville..... but for a few days paſt I have been more calm. I have quitted the town of Clermont, and have taken up my quarters in a mill, ſituated at the foot of the mountain of Royat. This profound ſolitude, the murmur of the waters, the raviſhing beauty of the ſurrounding ſcenery, every thing attaches me to this abode, the only one that ſuits me at this moment. I want to compoſe myſelf. Erneville, always ſo dear to my heart, preſents to me nothing but recollections, the charm of which is loſt for me; I retrace to myſelf only with a painful emotion the peaceful days of our infancy, and early youth. What a contraſt, with the trouble by which I am now agitated!..... I ought to have remained *your brother*..... Ah! what have you done, in entruſting to me your deſtiny! I have deſtroyed your repoſe and happineſs!.....

I am tempted to ſtay here till autumn; it ſeems to me that you ought to be quiet,

only when I am abſent. Between Maurice and Léocadie, your days will always glide ſmoothly away..... From the firſt glimpſe of the morn, I wander mournfully over this mountain; here I think of you, and always of you, I dare not wiſh you here; I call you not hither; you no longer hear me, you would not anſwer me!.....

I draw, I write, I read. You would never divine what book I am running over at this moment: *Les cauſes cêlèbres*, and ſolely for the purpoſe of reading again the ſtories of Lebrun and of Langlade, thoſe unfortunate perſons, whom ſo many falſe appearances made paſs for guilty. I love to bring again to my view thoſe aſtoniſhing ſports of chance!

And you, what do you do?..... Divert yourſelf with muſic, and write novels, in which you deſcribe nothing but filial piety, maternal love, and friendſhip..... Write to me at leaſt; anſwer me, at great length, this ſtrange letter which I ought to tear, perhaps,

perhaps, inſtead of ſending it to you. But, were I even to act with this prudence to-day, I ſhould ſtill yield another time to the wiſh and the want of ſpeaking to you without any diſguiſe .....

Adieu, my Pauline, adieu! be indulgent towards your friend, he is much to be pitied!

LETTER XXIX.

The MARCHIONESS's *Anſwer.*

June 2.

MY firſt duty is to thank you, and that I do from the bottom of my ſoul. You reſtore me your confidence, this is reſtoring me all my happineſs. Confidence is the only real proof of true friendſhip; we do not always maſter our imagination; we

may repel ideas which the heart diſarms, and we cannot prevent them from ariſing; but frankneſs and confidence depend ſolely on our will: they repair every thing; and whoever never fails in it with his friend, is never unpardonably in the wrong.

I will, dear Albert, anſwer you methodically. Let us ſpeak firſt of the ſeal. This article of your letter made me ſhudder!..... Great God! this ſeal belonged to the Duke de Roſmond!..... Alas! I can only repeat to you: *I am innocent!* I find not even a ſingle argument that I can oppoſe to yours; I at preſent believe, like you, that the Duke de Roſmond is father of this child; and, like you, I do not conceive the motives and the object of all this intrigue. By the *calculation* of the time, I do not better conceive who can be *the mother*; the Duke at this period was, in fact, concealed *in the environs of Erneville*. .....But I am innocent, I ſwear it to you by all that is moſt ſacred, I am perfectly innocent

innocent..... Oh! who would have told me that I ſhould be forced to have recourſe to oaths, in order to perſuade you that I am not an *adultereſs!*..... Adverſity can then degrade!.....

As I have before obſerved, we owe to friendſhip an entire confidence, unleſs that confidence be to the perſon who ſhould receive it, a diſgrace and an irretrievable misfortune. The diſcloſure of a ſecret, far from being then an affecting proof of confidence, would no longer be any thing but a mad and cruel indiſcretion. So then, if I were culpable, I would not avow it to you; I would not deprive you of that ſort of doubt which my ſilence, in this reſpect, would always leave you; I would not completely profane the ſacred bonds of marriage, by irrevocably diſhonouring myſelf in your eyes; I ſhould have the hope that my fault, doubtful in my youth, would become more ſo in the courſe of time; and that I might one day be able to re-

cover your eſteem. But in this odious ſuppoſition, I repeat it to you, I would not add effrontery to infidelity. I would content myſelf with being ſilent; I would elude your queſtions; I would, in order not to anſwer them, affect the pride that ſcorns to juſtify itſelf; and conſequently I ſhould not preſs you to open your heart to me; I would not inceſſantly ſolicit explanations. This is what ought to prove to you my innocence, if you reflect on my diſpoſition. Without the hope of convincing you by the ſole force of truth, what pleaſure could I have in hearing myſelf accuſed of a crime; in impoſing on myſelf continually and unneceſſarily the obligation of diſſembling, of lying, of compoſing my face, and the tone of my voice!..... You believe me, you ſay, when you liſten to me, and above all when you look at me. Ah! content yourſelf with this proof; impoſture can ſeduce by arguments artfully prepared; but the countenance, the look, the expreſſion of the

the features, the accent of the voice deceive not: when all theſe things united conſtantly perſuade, 'tis Nature herſelf who ſpeaks, and juſtifies innocence.

You think that Jacinthe has been bought by preſents: this may be; and I inſiſt on your going to Bourbon, in order to interrogate her. You add: "*Others have* "*alſo received money.*" Whom do you ſuſpect? I beg you to explain to me this phraſe.

As for the *particular ſecret* that *hangs heavy on your mind*, I do not wiſh to know it. If it be offenſive to me, you owe your wife the reſpect to conceal what ſhe cannot hear without impropriety; if it does not concern me, it undoubtedly intereſts other perſons; and probity forbids your revealing it to me: it is ſufficient for me that you have told that which you could confide to me; you would afflict me cruelly, by employing with me ſubterfuges and falſehood. We may blend frankneſs with diſcretion; conceal from me what

what I ought to be ignorant of; but do not deceive me.

What reply ſhall I make to the article of your letter, where you declare to me that ſince the period of our diſſenſions, your ſentiments for me have aſſumed *all the characteriſtics of paſſion?* ..... O! how much do you make me deſpiſe love, ſince it can ſpring from contempt? ..... What! ſince you miſtruſt me, you love me *with more violence?* When you ſuſpect me to be the moſt audacious and the moſt hypocritical of women, you think me more engaging? This is what inſpires you with *paſſion?* ..... Ah! you have reaſon to regret your former ſentiment: it was worthy of you ..... it did me honour; it made my felicity; and that which you deſcribe to me can be inſpired only by a courtezan: and, indeed, it is founded only on your error. ..... I ſee what men call *love*, is nothing more than a wandering of the imagination ..... In fact, lawful love, mutual and perfectly happy, was never durable;

durable; this ſentiment requires either contrarieties and obſtacles, the charm of myſtery, or the ſhameful allurement of licentiouſneſs and vice *.

O! my brother! O! my friend, become again Albert for your Pauline, who has never changed!..... We have before us a long futurity; it is in your hands; you alone are the arbiter of it; you are on earth my *viſible providence*. I can only form wiſhes, and you—you diſpoſe of our fate, which depends only on your

* However this opinion of Madame de Genlis may be confirmed by the corruption of human nature; may not our propenſity to change and variety be more juſtly attributed to the falſe refinements of vanity, than to a radical defect in our compoſition? In love, as in all things, a line muſt be drawn; or, in other words, there ought to be more friendſhip, and leſs paſſion; otherwiſe, the infallible conſequence muſt be, what it ever has been, and ever will be.

Tranſlator's Note.

" The beſt of things, beyond their meaſure, cloy;
" Sleep's balmy bleſſing, love's endearing joy;
" The feaſt, the dance; whate'er mankind deſire,
" Ev'n the ſweet charm of ſacred numbers tire."

POPE's *verſion of* HOMER's *Iliad*, Book xiii. l. 795.

ſentiments.

ſentiments. Erneville, you ſay, now occaſions you no more than a *painful emotion*! Alas! for three years and a half, I have but too well experienced theſe troubleſome ſenſations! But reſtore to me your eſteem, and theſe once-favoured ſpots will reſume for us all their charms.

Come back, my friend; quit that mountain, that grotto, and thoſe rocks; quit a ſolitude, where your imagination is bewildered and inflamed! Abſence has already coſt me ſo dear!..... Ah! had you never left me, how happy ſhould we be! Come back, or permit me to go to you: I *ſhall hear you* always, when you call me.

LETTER XXX.

The MARQUIS's *Anſwer.*

From the Mountain of Royat. June 8.

IT is true, my dear Pauline, nothing would have diſturbed my happineſs, if leſs imprudent,

prudent, and leſs inconſiderate, I had not prolonged my ſtay in that dangerous abode where the imagination takes fire, where principles are adulterated, where example grows familiar with vice! ..... My heart could not have been corrupted there, ſince it was always yours; but how changed are my diſpoſition and inclinations! .....

You ſhun the ſecret, which I conſented to tell you: I admire you, my Pauline! ..... How I love your underſtanding, which ſerves only to embelliſh and ſtrengthen your reaſon! I ſhall be ſilent; but I muſt confeſs to you one thing. It is, that I was abſolutely forced to make a ſecret journey to Paris, during the time when I went to Vichi; I confeſs to you even that I went to Vichi only to conceal this ſtep. Forgive me, Pauline; I have ſince warmly reproached myſelf with this falſehood and diſſimulation! .....

All that you ſay about love is very ſevere: I ſhall make you but one reply. It

is,

is, that love does not exclude friendſhip; I have, beſides, a ſentiment that you do not feel. At leaſt do not queſtion me about it, Pauline, ſince you are unacquainted with it!

You recall me, and I am going to ſet out; I ſhall be at Erneville in two or three days after my letter.

Adieu, my friend, let us ſay no more of the paſt, and be aſſured that the ruling wiſh, or, to ſpeak more correctly, the ſole wiſh of my heart, is to ſee you happy.

P. S. I ſhall not go to Bourbon, to interrogate Jacinthe. As for what I ſaid, that "others had alſo received money," it is a vague conjecture. But let us think no more but of the preſent and the future. Our explanations have been frank and complete: let us drop the ſubject for ever.

LETTER XXXI.

From the MARCHIONESS *to the* BARONESS DE VODAC.

July 1.

ALBERT arrived laſt night; I think he has fallen away; he has ſuffered on that mountain!..... he is more, than ever, kind, feeling, and generous. He has in his look a ſomething melancholy and affecting that penetrates me!..... He equally careſſed Maurice and Léocadie; this little girl loves him extremely; and, at the ſame time, ſhe fears him very much; I know not why, for he has never ſcolded her.

Will you believe that I cannot, without a ſort of pain, ſee this child in his arms! I fancy always that, at the bottom of his heart, the careſſes of this poor little angel are not agreeable to him! He has ſo

ſtrange

ſtrange a manner of looking at her, eſpecially when he thinks that I have not my eyes on him!.....When we are alone, and ſhe is on his lap, an unconquerable inquietude, mixed with a certain painful emotion, excites in me a thouſand confuſed movements of gratitude, melancholy, tenderneſs, and pity. And when we are in company, I feel embarraſſed. I can, for myſelf, eaſily diſdain the opinion of others when it is unjuſt; but how brave it for Albert! At the time of the greateſt clamour againſt me, I had a particular pleaſure in always ſaying *my daughter*, in ſpeaking of Léocadie before the calumniators. And, when before theſe very perſons ſhe calls Albert *papa*, I experience an undeſcribable feeling, which reſembles ſhame and remorſe!.....O! who can explain all that paſſes in a truly tender and delicate heart!..... It is very eaſy to know men in general; for this, it requires only to have combined all the reſults of vanity, frivolity,

frivolity, and perſonal intereſt. We then have the explanation of all their actions, of all their flights; but privileged ſouls, thoſe generous and profoundly-feeling ſouls, theſe we cannot *ſtudy*: it is impoſſible to foreſee their infinitely-varied movements, and frequently even, to comprehend the cauſes of them.

In order to get rid of the fatal ſeal, I had an intention of making a preſent of it to Monſieur Remi; for the cypher happens to be his, and that of Monſieur du Reſnel and *Mademoiſelle du Rocher*. But Albert will not abſolutely allow it. He ſays that I have no right to diſpoſe of this ſeal, which belongs to Léocadie and muſt be of value to her. He even poſitively requires that ſhe ſhould wear it *when ſhe is dreſſed*.

In the firſt impulſe of a lively ſorrow, I laſt year told you in confidence, my dear friend, that Albert had made a ſecret journey to Paris; and now I muſt tell you, for

for his juſtification, that, being entirely ignorant of my having diſcovered this myſtery, he has had the ſincerity to inform me of it. This proof of candour, regard, and confidence, has affected me beyond all expreſſion. In order to leave him, in his own eyes, all the merit of this confidence, I did not wiſh him to know that he told me nothing new, the more eſpecially as he would not, perhaps, ſee any thing but indifference in the delicacy which led me to be ſilent on this head. Alas! he no longer relies on my ſentiments as formerly!..... La France, whoſe diſcretion I reward by a ſmall penſion, has perfectly kept this ſecret, and will certainly never reveal it.

Simon, who wiſhes not to ſet out in the dark, preſſes me to deliver my anſwer.

Adieu, then, my amiable friend. We ſhall go on Monday to Gilly; and if the Baron has ſtill the gout, and conſequently you are not able to quit him, we will come and ſleep at your houſe; and we will not return hither till Tueſday evening.

LETTER XXXIII.

From MADAME D'ORGEVAL *to the* CHEVALIER DE CELTAS.

September 3.

YESTERDAY there was a *fête champêtre* at Erneville. The miſtreſs of the houſe did not dance, becauſe ſhe is three months gone with child. *This time* ſhe has declared her pregnancy. She was habited as an *Auvergnate* peaſant, which occaſioned many inſipid things to be ſaid; but this dreſs is ridiculous, and by no means becomes her.

Before dinner, we had an aſtoniſhing ſcene which is ſtill an enigma to me. We were all in the drawing-room, the uſual grand party, Monſieur du Reſnel, the

the Baron, the Baroneſs, Madame Regnard, and ſeveral ſtrangers, two drinkers of the waters of Bourbon-Lancy, and three perſons from Moulins. The dinner hour was paſſed; and, according to cuſtom, *Madame la Marquiſe* kept her company waiting for her; at length the door was thrown open, and ſhe made her appearance holding in one hand Maurice, and in the other *the little girl*; this group diſpoſed ſo as to *make a model for a picture*, as you have very juſtly obſerved. The little girl was dreſſed out in all her finery; ſhe had on all her *anonymous* trinkets; among others a charming little watch which I had never ſeen. Monſieur du Reſnel, by way of *making love* to the Marchioneſs, advanced towards the little girl and took her into his arms. I was by ſide him; and I began to look at the new watch and a very beautiful ſeal hanging to an enamelled chain. I took notice of this ſeal to Monſieur du Reſnel, who

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on perceiving it, made, at the firſt impulſe, a great exclamation which fixed on us general attention. Monſieur du Reſnel, completely abſorbed in a reverie, ſeeing nothing but the ſeal, held and examined it with the moſt attentive and moſt aſtoniſhed look. I very well remarked that, during this time, Pauline turned pale, and the *great Albert* became confuſed..... Pauline called back Léocadie. At this moment it was announced that dinner was on the table. Monſieur du Reſnel neither ate nor ſpoke; and, immediately on riſing from table, he took the married couple into a cabinet, where they remained all three ſhut in for upwards of two hours. Afterwards they returned to the drawing-room with very penſive, but tolerably ſatisfied countenances. All the reſt of the day there was a great deal of whiſpering; however I could not make any diſcovery. Well, Chevalier, you who have ſo much

penetration, can you gueſs the bottom card of all this?

I have to relate to you a ſcene of a quite different kind, which will certainly divert you. Laſt Thurſday my brother-in-law and his wife came to my uncle's; they ſlept there, and brought with them Mademoiſelle du Rocher. We likewiſe had Monſieur du Reſnel, and the *ninny of a ſecretary* Remi. I amuſed myſelf by putting the latter and Mademoiſelle du Rocher into the ſmall rooms on the ſecond floor, which have a door of communication concealed by a piece of tapeſtry; and of this I ſlily cauſed the amorous Remi to be informed. I took good care not to entruſt this prank to *the auſtere Pauline*, and the *moralizing Albert*; but I told it to little Mademoiſelle Verrier who was at our houſe. When every one was gone to bed, we aſcended quite ſoftly into the gallery, in order to liſten at the doors. I had made a hole in that of Remi, ſo that we could very well

ſee every thing that he did in his room. He wrote, and then he walked about much agitated, and, from time to time, he applied his ear cloſe to the door of communication. This amuſed us in ſuch a manner, that we remained here for upwards of an hour and a-half. At laſt, all on a ſudden, we perceived a very ſtrong ſmell of ſmoke and fire; and we ſaw, through the crevices of Mademoiſelle du Rocher's door, an extraordinary light in her chamber. I had about me my *paſſe-partout**; I put it into the lock; I opened the door, and thus we got into the room. Imagine what a fine ſtage effect was here! Preciſely at the moment when we entered, the amorous Remi, on his ſide, opened the door of communication; and we found ourſelves face to face!..... But another unexpected ſight

* A maſter-key which, being to fit all the wards of the locks of the different rooms, opens every door in the houſe. *Tranſlator.*

fixed all our attention; du Rocher having fallen aſleep, while reading in her bed *Les galanteries grenadines*†, had not put out her candle; her curtains had caught fire, and were all in flames..... Remi ſprang forward to the bed, and, with great intrepidity, tore away the only two tatters of printed calico that remained ſuſpended over the head of his charmer. As there were ſtill on the counterpane ſome ſparks burning, little Verrier took a jug full of red water made with roſe ſcented ſoap for the hands, and threw it on the bed; I ſeized hold of a water veſſel, which I alſo emptied on the ſheets; and, to my great aſtoniſhment, I perceived that this liquid was alſo a *coſmetic*; it was eggs beat up in milk. Du Rocher never woke till the laſt aſperſion. The fire extinguiſhed, and our fright diſſipated, we no longer thought of any thing but the heroine of this ro-

† A novel written by Madame de Villedieu.

mantic

mantic ſcene; we ſought in vain that fair and ſhining face, which, in the laſt, five and twenty years, has completely exhauſted all the receipts for beauty. We ſaw in this bed only a ſhapeleſs, frightful countenance; the belle had, on her forehead, a fillet ſpread over with wax and oil, as a preſervative againſt wrinkles; two ſmall ſlices of raw veal covered her cheeks; and her arms and hands were concealed in what are called *chicken gloves*. Add to this, the red water and omelet which we had ſcattered on the ſheets, and imagine, if you can, what a *lover* muſt have experienced at this aſpect! The poor creature's confuſion was inexpreſſible; the fond Remi ſhrunk back with fright, and fled with precipitation: I do not think he will ever get the better of it. He ſwore to us, the next day, that he had entered the room only becauſe he had perceived the ſmoke: we muſt believe him.

Adieu, Chevalier. I am ignorant

where this letter will find you, for I know not whether you are at Autun, Dijon, or Moulins. Will you never tire of ſo wandering a life? what then, will you never *ſettle?*

LETTER XXXIII.

From the MARCHIONESS *to the* COUNTESS.

Erneville, September 9.

WELL, my dear mother, this fatal ſeal has produced another new adventure!... Monſieur du Reſnel, on ſeeing it, knew it again for a ſeal which he beſpoke thirteen or fourteen years ago, and which he gave to his wife, whoſe chriſtian name is *Reine*; and this is the reaſon why the cypher is compoſed of two *R*'s. It is fully proved that Monſieur du Reſnel cauſed this ſeal

to

to be made; for he informed us of what we had not before perceived; which was that the ſeal opened. Monſieur du Reſnel ſhewed us the ſecret; we opened it, and found in it a ſmall lock of hair of a fine deep black. (The Duke de Roſmond is extremely fair.) This diſcovery immediately ſuggeſted to Monſieur du Reſnel the thought that Madame du Reſnel is Léocadie's mother. This idea appeared to him ſo clear, that he communicated it to us at the very moment. When we informed him that this ſeal had paſſed into the hands of the Duke de Roſmond, he aſſerted that the latter had returned it to Madame du Reſnel, in order that ſhe might ſend it to her daughter; that the black hair contained in the ſeal, and which he knew to be Madame du Reſnel's, proved that the ſeal had been reſtored to her, becauſe it was not probable that the Duke would have kept ſo carefully the hair of a perſon whom he had not loved for a

long time paſt. To theſe conjectures we oppoſed the well-known quarrel between the Duke and Madame du Reſnel, previous to Léocadie's birth, and the Duke's journey into Burgundy, while Madame du Reſnel was in Paris. Monſieur du Reſnel anſwered that Léocadie might be the fruit of a temporary reconciliation; that Madame du Reſnel, who had never ceaſed to love the Duke, might very well have made a ſecret journey into Burgundy, which was the more probable, as the Duke, on his return to Paris, had haſtened to go to her houſe, and to pay her ſome very marked attentions; that, at this period, Madame du Reſnel ſaying ſhe was ill had kept her room for near a year, which had given riſe to a pretty general report, that this pretended illneſs was nothing more than an artifice to conceal a pregnancy. In fact, Madame du Reſnel ſhewed us the Viſcount de St. Méran's letters written at the time, and in which are all theſe details,

details, ſo that nothing is more probable. Albert is perſuaded that Monſieur du Reſnel has gueſſed right. If we are not miſtaken, what joy, my dear mother, will this occaſion! But I dare not yet wholly give way to this hope! However, in this ſuppoſition even, many things will diſturb my happineſs. I own to you that I ſhould have wiſhed my Léocadie another mother; I repreſented to myſelf hers under ſuch affecting features! I am terrified when I think that this innocent creature owes her life to the *Duke de Roſmond* and *Madame du Reſnel!*..... Beſides, this woman, ſo capricious, ſo brazen-faced, may one day, very probably, take back her child from me!..... With what ſorrow ſhould I part from her, and to deliver her up to ſuch hands!..... This idea diſtracts me.

Monſieur du Reſnel will write to Madame du Reſnel, that he is certain Léocadie is her daughter, that he requires

from her this confeſſion, and that if ſhe will make it to him, he will ſettle an annuity of twelve thouſand livres on the child. As Madame du Reſnel has no perſonal fortune, and the Duke de Roſmond will certainly do nothing ſimilar, there is no doubt that, if Madame du Reſnel is mother to my Léocadie, ſhe will not heſitate, for the intereſt of her child, to acknowledge it, the more eſpecially as her *modeſty* will not make this confeſſion very painful to her. However, as you may well ſuppoſe, we ſhall never publicly reveal this myſtery. Madame du Reſnel bears the name of our generous friend, ſo we ſhould be inexcuſable if we had ſo little delicacy as to divulge her ſhame.

Adieu, my mother, my agitation is inexpreſſible. As ſoon as we have an anſwer, I will ſend it to you; and if our conjectures are well founded, if we receive the wiſhed-for confeſſion, I will diſpatch to you a ſpecial meſſenger.

LETTER XXXIV.

From MONSIEUR DU RESNEL, *to the* VISCOUNT DE ST. MÉRAN.

Gilly, September 12.

THE queſtion, my friend, is to render me the greateſt of all ſervices. I ſend you the letter which I have written to Madame du Reſnel; read it,—in it every thing is explained; I really believe that little Léocadie is the daughter of the Duke de Roſmond and Madame du Reſnel. I beg you to go yourſelf to the latter, to carry her my letter, to read it to her, and, in caſe ſhe ſhould perſiſt in a denial, to promiſe her from me a *thouſand louis* in ready money, for the confeſſion which I ſolicit. This promiſe is ever to remain ſecret between us; you muſt be ſenſible of all the

reaſons that can make me deſirous of this ..... I ſhould be very glad if this method were not neceſſary, not for the ſake of ſaving a *thouſand louis*, but for my own inward ſatisfaction! .....

Madame du Reſnel is ſo deceitful, and ſo addicted to falſehood, that ſhe will certainly begin by a denial. Do not be diſheartened, my dear Viſcount; conſider that I entruſt to you the deareſt of intereſts. ..... O! how happy ſhould I be, if I ſaw the moſt perfect of women completely juſtified.

Adieu, my friend, I rely on your zeal, on your activity, and on an early anſwer.

If a *thouſand louis* ſhould not be ſufficient, promiſe every thing that is neceſſary to determine her to tell the truth. Burn this letter.

LETTER XXXV.

The VISCOUNT'S *Anſwer.*

Paris, November 14.

I DID not receive your letter till the day before yeſterday, on my return from Normandy. This letter had been neglected to be forwarded to me, and fortunately I found it on my chimney. I have already ſent to Madame du Reſnel's; ſhe is not in Paris. She is at a country-houſe in the environs of Senlis; but ſhe is expected every day, which prevents me from going after her; I will make a point of ſeeing her this week. I write to you this note, only to tranquillize you in regard to your commiſſion.

Adieu, my friend, you ſhall ſoon hear from me.

LETTER XXXVI.

From the ſame to the ſame.

Paris, November 19.

AFTER having in vain waited for Madame du Reſnel for a week, I reſolved to go to Senlis; but judge of my vexation when I there learnt that Madame du Reſnel had ſet out for Lyons, four days before, where ſhe will paſs the whole winter. I returned to Paris; I aſked and obtained leave of abſence, and I ſhall ſet out the day after to-morrow for Lyons. Therefore take patience, my friend. I hope to be able to ſend you a definite anſwer next week.

LETTER XXXVII.

From the ſame to the ſame.

Lyons, December 12.

I SEND you, my friend, in this very packet, a letter writen to be *ſhewn to your friends*; *this* is for you *alone*. I intend, in my way back to Paris, to pay you a viſit, and to paſs two days with you; but, in order to entirely finiſh your buſineſs, I ſhall remain here three weeks longer; and, as I imagine that you will have a curioſity to know the *true* particulars, I will not make you wait for them.

When I arrived here, Madame du Reſnel was at Alix, a chapter of canoneſſes, whither her *guide* has conducted her. This guide is one Monſieur de Bel ***, a native

a native of Dijon, related to the Chevalier de Celtas, and who having made ſeveral journies to Paris, there became acquainted with Madame du Reſnel, whoſe preſent lover he is. This Monſieur de Bel*** has a ſiſter, a canoneſs at Alix, with whom Madame du Reſnel paſſed a fortnight.

I was not able to obtain my audience till the day after her arrival here. I gave her your letter; ſhe manifeſted the greateſt ſurpriſe on reading it, and formally denied the facts. I turned her about in every way; ſhe perſiſted, and even with ſpleen and raillery..... It then became abſolutely neceſſary to ſpeak of the *thouſand louis*; ſhe viſibly grew mild, and fell into a reverie. I ſtill continued to preſs her; ſhe anſwered me that this buſineſs required deliberate reflection; I foreſaw that ſhe wiſhed to conſult, and I took upon myſelf to tell her, that you required abſolute ſecrecy; that, in conſequence, you would give at firſt no more than five hundred louis, with

with a promiſe to pay the other five hundred at the expiration of eighteen months, if ſhe conducted herſelf with perfect diſcretion. Her affairs are in the greateſt diſorder; ſhe quitted Paris only on account of her debts, ſo I was very ſure that ſhe would accept the propoſal, even in this manner.

It was impoſſible for me, however, to obtain an anſwer on that day. But three days after, ſhe poſitively owned to me that Léocadie is her daughter; and that the Duke de Roſmond is the father of this child. She even told me things that I did not aſk; ſhe related to me that ſhe had taken a trip into Burgundy diſguiſed as a man, and alſo ſeveral other particulars. I own to you, that, on my firſt interview, I was perſuaded that ſhe would not make the wiſhed-for confeſſion, but through *complaiſance*; and now I ſincerely believe that ſhe is, in fact, the mother of this child.

This woman, whom I have ſeen ſo brilliant and ſo handſome, is no longer eaſy to

to be known again; her face is quite ſpoiled, and the white paint ſhe wears does not mend it. The journey to Nice has ſomewhat re-eſtabliſhed her health; but ſhe is ſtill dreadfully thin. Within theſe two years, eſpecially, ſhe has fallen into a ſtrange debaſement; ſhe has given herſelf up to bad company; and, from her manners, one would imagine that ſhe had never lived in any other. Nothing *gathers ruſt* ſo quickly as vice, when we abandon ourſelves to it without reſerve.

I ſend you the rough draught of *her declaration in writing*. See if it be to your mind, and make in it the alterations that you may think neceſſary. Write to Monſieur D****, Banker, *Place Bellecour*, to pay me the five hundred louis, and addreſs your letters to me under cover to him.

Adieu, my friend, I feel and ſhare the joy that this letter will occaſion you.

LETTER XXXVIII.

From the MARQUIS D'ERNEVILLE *to the* COUNTESS.

December 22.

PAULINE is innocent!..... She is juſtified, completely juſtified!..... Pauline is an angel, a being truly celeſtial!..... And I, what am I, great God!.....a monſter of injuſtice and ingratitude!..... Madame du Reſnel is Léocadie's mother. I ſend you a copy of her declaration, and even the letter of the Viſcount de St. Méran to our excellent friend. You will there ſee that this huſſey, who has occaſioned us ſo much trouble, diſguiſed herſelf as a man; and, in this dreſs, paſſed twelve days with the *Duke concealed in a village in the environs of Erneville*. It was

at

at Malta. I own to you that my uneaſineſs, which induced me to make private inquiries, led me to Malta; where I learnt that the Duke was alone for two days, and that, at laſt, a young lad of an elegant perſon came thither, and remained there with him *twelve days*; every one, it is ſaid, was perſuaded that this pretty lad was a woman in diſguiſe. This is what was told to me at the time, and this coincides perfectly well with the confeſſion of Madame du Reſnel.

When I now recollect Pauline's letters to Madame de Vordac, written at this very time, and all which I have read; and when I reflect on her diſpoſition, I am at a loſs to conceive how I could poſſibly ſuſpect her. All thoſe circumſtances which ſeemed to me ſo ſtriking, no longer appear to me any thing but puerilities..... Yet a great many things which contributed to miſlead me, are not known to you; there are ſome even which I cannot comprehend;

prehend; but of what conſequence is that to me? All the eſſential point is cleared up and perfectly explained.

Ah! my dear mother! I was not worthy of the treaſure which you entruſted to me..... my life cannot be ſufficiently long to repair my faults..... I dare, however, aſſure you, I never poſitively believed, for twelve hours ſucceſſively, that ſhe was guilty..... But I will not endeavour to excuſe myſelf; ah! penetrated by the moſt bitter repentance, I experience a very oppoſite ſentiment!.... You know not to what degree I am criminal..... and when Pauline is juſtified, I feel more than ever the want of opening to you my heart!..... She has repelled this confidence; but I owe it to you; may it, in your eyes, be the expiation of an unpardonable error!..... This detail almoſt requires a volume; I muſt have time to write it; but you ſhall have it in the courſe of three weeks.

I will

I will not detain the meſſenger that I ſend to you. Adieu, my reſpectable and generous friend; O! how much I ſtand in need of your maternal indulgence!....

LETTER XXXIX.

The COUNTESS's *Anſwer.*

Dijon, September 25.

O! WHAT happineſs to ſee her juſtified in your eyes!..... Intereſting and dear child, with what mildneſs, with what dignity ſhe has ſupported the dreadful weight of calumny! With what patience, with what ſenſibility ſhe has endured your prepoſſeſſions!..... What reparation you owe her!..... But, in your grateful and generous ſoul, ſhe will find all that my affection for her and for you can deſire.

Dear Albert, you have to reproach yourſelf with a ſecret error? ..... I ſhall be leſs ſurprized than you imagine. I have not the candour of Pauline; and that journey to Paris, ſo prolonged, gave me more than one alarming ſuſpicion. But you repent, and you love Pauline; every thing is expiated. This is all that women have a right to expect and to require from a lover, or the moſt perfect huſband. Ah! how inconſiderate we are, when we love paſſionately, ſince it is impoſſible that we can obtain a ſincere return! ..... Between ourſelves, in love there is no reciprocity. How few men can be compared to Albert, and yet Albert was faithleſs eighteen months after marriage! .....

I ſhall blame you, Albert, I ſhall not comprehend you, when I think of my Pauline; but I ſhall excuſe you. No; I do not repent having given you my daughter. I loved you as much as her: you were my ſon, and you would always have been

ſo,

ſo, even though you had not received her hand. Do you know what determined me to chooſe you for her huſband? It was not the hope that you would never ſwerve from the principles which I gave you; it was the certainty that you would take every pains to preſerve thoſe of Pauline. I have long remarked that, in general, the errors of women ought to be attributed only to the inconſiſtency of their huſbands.

The man who marries a young girl becauſe ſhe has been perfectly well brought up, has talents, principles, and good qualities, ought to wiſh to preſerve in her theſe precious fruits of a good education; and this is what we never ſee. The firſt thing that a huſband does, eſpecially if he be young and fond, is to prevail on his wife to neglect every ſerious and uſeful occupation, and to turn almoſt into ridicule the advice and the principles which ſhe has received from her parents. He does not conſider, that the morality which may be

ſufficient

ſufficient for the reputation of a man, would be exceſſively relaxed for that of a woman; and we ſhould imagine that his project was to corrupt his wife, if we judged of his intentions by his converſation and behaviour. This is what he is, as long as he loves, that is to ſay, ſix months or a year; and, after having thus ſhaken the principles of a young woman, over whom love gave him ſo much aſcendancy, he neglects her; he becomes, if he can, a *man of gallantry*, or ruins himſelf with courtezans. What can reſult from all this? Alas! what we ſee ſo frequently?.....

I was ſure, dear Albert, that you would not deſtroy my work, that you would not make your wife an *atheiſt* or *a deiſt*, that you would engage her to cultivate her mind, that you would not allow her to read improper books; and that you would confirm her in all the moral opinions which ſhe derives from me. I was ſure, in ſhort, that you would never ſuffer her to form dan-

gerous connexions, and that you would, in this reſpect, have as much delicacy and ſeverity as I could poſſibly have myſelf.

I have, therefore, nothing to reproach you with, as your mother-in-law; on the contrary, I owe you the moſt affectionate gratitude. As your mother, I ſhall receive, with indulgence and ſenſibility, the confeſſions for which I ſhall be indebted only to your friendſhip. Baniſh your fears then, my dear Albert! Ah! you ought to know this maternal heart! You might rather ſuſpect it of weakneſs than of rigour towards you; but you have ſo well juſtified this fond affection with which you inſpired me from your cradle, that, at this day, it is no more than juſtice.

Adieu, my Albert: Since *unfortunately*, we have a ſecret that Pauline does not know; I ſhall write to you another letter which you may ſhew her.

LETTER XL.

From the MARCHIONESS D'ERNEVILLE *to the* BARONESS DE VORDAC.

Erneville, January 4.

YES, my dear friend, Léocadie's *new-year's gift* is arrived as uſual. It conſiſts of playthings, three charming little frocks, and a neck-lace with a double row of very fine pearls. We expected to receive this preſent from *Lyons*; but, as before, the box is come from Paris; this aſtoniſhes me in every way; for it ſeems to me that theſe preſents are deviſed and arranged by a woman, and by a maternal hand. I cannot conceive how ſo volatile a man can be capable of ſuch attention, and of perſevering in it ſo long. We think that the mo-

ther has at leaſt the merit of invention, and that ſhe beſpeaks what is to be purchaſed. Perhaps when ſhe was in Paris, ſhe ſent the preceding preſents.

Certainly, my dear friend, I am *again become* perfectly happy. Albert is adorable. He is poſſeſſed of a ſenſibility too profound and too true to be embarraſſed at having been in the wrong. Nothing equals his natural kindneſs and the generoſity of his diſpoſition. O! if you knew how much he now careſſes my Léocadie, how he loves her, and with what ſweet looks he contemplates her! The little girl gets attached to him to ſuch degree as to make me jealous; ſhe ſaid to him yeſterday: "*A'n't you my papa in good* "*earneſt?*" .....

She ſees very well, by his countenance, that ſhe no longer ought to fear him; and indeed ſhe plays with him as familiarly as with me. How I love this child! ſhe announces ſo much underſtanding and ſenſibility!

ſibility! Alas! at preſent ſhe belongs to me leſs!..... One day ſhe ſhall know her mother, ſhe ſhall always be ignorant how contemptible ſhe is, ſhe ſhall know of her only the error which gave her life, and what child would not excuſe that!..... As ſoon as Léocadie's reaſon begins to unfold itſelf, it will be neceſſary to inform her of the ſecret of her birth, and give her all her mother's preſents, which, at that age, will inſpire her, perhaps, with more gratitude than all my attentions. I ſhall no longer be the object of the firſt ſentiment of her young heart!..... She will have for her mother a paſſionate affection, I am certain. This artful woman is ſo handſome and ſo ſeducing!.....

Explain to me why, never having been jealous of Albert, I ſhall be jealous of Léocadie!.....

Adieu, my friend, we are going to ſpend a fortnight at Dijon, in order to

enjoy the felicity of our happy mother. We ſhall ſet out on Saturday or Monday: will you not come and bid me adieu?

My ſiſter-in-law is here with her little Zéphyrine, who is a pretty child, even by the ſide of Léocadie.

LETTER XLI.

From MONSIEUR DU RESNEL *to the* BARONESS DE VORDAC.

Dijon, January 20.

I TAKE the liberty, Madam, of writing to you, in order to communicate to you ſome apprehenſions in which you will participate. I think that the miſchief-makers are hatching freſh plots againſt our friends.

I am aſſured that the Chevalier de Celtas has ſuddenly ſet out for *Lyons*. He

is

is very intimate with his couſin, Monſieur de Bel***. The latter is the *boſom* friend of Madame du Réſnel, ſo you will readily conceive that the journey of the Chevalier de Celtas has no other object than to ſatisfy his curioſity, in order to invent afterwards ſome atrocity. You might perhaps, Madam, learn through Madame Regnard, whether in fact, the Chevalier de Celtas is at Lyons. I ſhould have been very glad if *Léocadie*'s mother had quitted that city (which is too near us) to return to Paris. I own to you even that I have written to her to induce her to it; but ſhe has anſwered me, that the phyſicians have poſitively ordered her to paſs the winter at Lyons. .....

I was very anxious to communicate this ſecret to the Baron; it was pleaſing to me to juſtify Pauline completely to the eyes of an honeſt man; but I could have wiſhed that Monſieur d'Orgeval had not been made privy to the matter. Yet

when the Marquis mentioned it to me, I durſt not tell him what I thought of it; although he does not eſteem his brother, he is very far from knowing him, and he has certainly too much friendſhip for him. I know that Madame d'Orgeval has already taken the liberty of paſſing ſome jokes and ſneers reſpecting our ſecret. This woman, ſo ignorant, ſo ſlender-witted, and ſo inſipid, appears almoſt to have ſome genius when the queſtion is to turn things into ridicule; which alone might prove how eaſy this kind of wit is.

If I believed it, I would go to Lyons and myſelf ſee what is going on there. I imagine that my preſence would keep the Chevalier de Celtas a little within bounds. What do you think of it, Madam? Does not this journey appear ſingular? I am uneaſy; what courſe muſt I take? Adviſe me; one cannot do an imprudent or ill-timed thing in taking you for a guide.

LETTER XLII.

The BARONESS's *Anſwer.*

January 21.

No, Sir, do not go to Lyons; that journey would ſerve as a ſubject for a thouſand new ſtories. Let us leave the malicious to talk, the juſtification of our friend is complete; nothing henceforth can affect the eſteem, the confidence, and the juſt admiration of her huſband; her happineſs is ſecured: what is the reſt to us?

It is certain that the Chevalier de Celtas, the proudeſt and moſt diſſembling of men, is an implacable enemy. He has a thouſand reaſons for hating Pauline, and he deteſts her. But what can he do at preſent? ....

You muſt know that Monſieur and Madame d'Orgeval, who ſee far when their intereſt is concerned, have already views on little Maurice, for Zéphyrine; this is the reaſon why they ſhew for that child ſo warm an affection, and again begin to *cajole* Pauline. I am delighted at this project, becauſe it will certainly check, or at leaſt moderate, their malice. Baniſh your alarms then, Sir; I will venture to ſay that you ought, ſince I am eaſy.

I yeſterday received a letter from Pauline, ſhe will return in a few days.

LETTER XLIII.

From the CHEVALIER DE CELTAS *to* MADAME D'ORGEVAL.

Lyons, February 1.

IN obedience to the commands of *my ſovereign queen*, I was willing to obtain a complete knowledge of *facts* before I wrote to her: *I now know every thing.* We had gueſſed perfectly right; but, to ſpeak the truth, that was no difficult matter. Bel***, has told me the whole ſtory, which may poſſibly make a very new epiſode in a *certain novel.* A huſband who gives his wife *three thouſand louis*, in order to obtain from her the declaration of a weakneſs, that ſhe has not had, is an incident quite new. I have ſeen this

famous beauty; ſhe has nothing left but a pleaſing manner, and an engaging ſtyle of converſation. I paſſed a day with her at the Chapter of Alix, at Bel***'s ſiſter's, who is her friend. We talked of the *philoſopher* of Gilly; "He has," ſaid ſhe "a "few whims; yet it may be ſaid, without "flattering him, that he is *a huſband of* "*ten thouſand.*" I thought I might venture ſome pleaſantries about the Duke de Roſmond; ſhe ſwore to me that ſhe had not *ſet eyes* on him ſince 17**; ſhe might add:

"——— *et le cœur tout gonflé d'amertume,*
"*Trois ans encore après, j'accouchai d'un poſthume**."

St. Méran, as we had alſo gueſſed, was the *ambaſſador* charged with this honourable negociation, and, for ſo great a ſervice,

* ———And my heart quite ſwollen with grief, even three years after, I brought into the world a poſthumous child.

the

the philoſopher has paid the debts of his noble and faithful friend. I am certain of this laſt fact. All this makes one ſick!

I keep for our evenings, *in the little committee*, ſome anecdotes, really pleaſant, which will make my *ſovereign queen* break out into thoſe fits of laughter that become her ſo well. I entreat her to reſerve, for my return, that amiable gaiety of which I ſo naturally partake when I am in her company.

LETTER XLIV.

From MONSIEUR D'ORGEVAL *to the* CHEVALIER DE CELTAS.

March 2.

MY ſiſter-in-law was yeſterday ſafely delivered of a boy, and the ſame day old Vordac had like to have died of the gout which flew up to his ſtomach. He would not, I believe, have left an inconſolable widow; Deniſe inſiſts that the Baroneſs has a *great paſſion* for the philoſopher, and I am perſuaded of it. This might very well ſet the two female friends by the ears; for it is impoſſible that the Baroneſs ſhould not ſee that he is madly fond of another. Can you conceive that my brother has not ſufficient penetration to

diſcover a thing which ſtares *every body* in the face? and to be the dupe of the laſt ſtory!.....

Adieu, my dear fellow, when you write to Bel***, don't forget to make my compliments to him.

LETTER XLV.

An anonymous, addreſſed to the MARQUIS D'ERNEVILLE.

SIR, Lyons, June 28.

A PERSON, who loves the truth, wiſhes to open your eyes to the moſt infamous impoſture, of which you alone are the dupe.

The *foundling* brought up under your roof, is not the daughter of Madame du Reſnel; the latter tells, whoever will hear her, that for theſe laſt ſeven years ſhe has not *ſet eyes* on the Duke de Roſmond.

But

But here are ſome poſitive facts, which you can aſcertain.

Madame du Reſnel came to Lyons on account of the derangement of her affairs; on her arrival there, ſhe hired a ſmall apartment, on the third floor, looking on the quays, and ſhe borrowed a *hundred louis* of Monſieur F***. A fortnight after the Viſcount de St. Méran's *viſits*, Madame du Reſnel quitted her humble lodging, in order to take a very handſome one on the *Place des Terreaux*, and ſhe repaid the hundred louis which ſhe had borrowed for a year. She lives at a great rate, gives ſuppers, and has a carriage, &c.

Beſides, Monſieur D***'s clerk has told ſeveral perſons that his maſter had, in the month of December laſt, remitted, on Monſieur du Reſnel's account, a *thouſand louis to the Viſcount de St. Méran.*

Reflect on all this, Sir, and ceaſe to give your confidence to an unprincipled and

and immoral impoſtor, who has no other project than that of deceiving you and of *entirely* corrupting your wife.

LETTER XLVI.

From the MARQUIS *to the* COUNTESS D'ERNEVILLE.

August 9.

AT length, my dear mother, here is this hiſtory ſo long promiſed. I could not write it but in private; it was a very difficult taſk for me, and almoſt impoſſible to be performed at Erneville. And indeed I wrote it only in my different private excurſions to Bourbon, and Moulins, and I finiſhed it at Decizes.

O! my friend, I cannot, without trembling, place before your eyes the details of a weakneſs, unpardonable in every reſpect! I

You

You will have the goodneſs to excuſe it, I am ſure; but I ſhall never forgive myſelf for it!.....

During the early part of my ſtay in Paris, I ſaw only your reſpectable relations for whom you had given me letters, the Marquis d'Olbreuſe and his wife. Their ſons were abſent; I had known the eldeſt in my boyiſh days; we had learned to ride together at Duguaſt's academy; and, from that time, we had conceived for each other a warm friendſhip. He was in England, and did not return thence till after the expiration of ſome months. We were extremely glad to meet again; I communicated to him my happineſs, and he imparted to me his hopes. For four years he had been in love with Madame de S****, who was married to a very infirm old man, labouring under a mortal complaint. The phyſicians having declared that it was impoſſible he could live more than two or three months, the

Chevalier

Chevalier d'Olbreuſe was certain of being at length united to the object of his attachment. He did not carry me to her houſe, becauſe her huſband's ſituation did not permit her to receive viſits.

I formed no other connexions till the period of the *fête* given by the Spaniſh Ambaſſador, on the occaſion of the birth of the Duke de ***. Two days before this entertainment, I was invited with d'Olbreuſe to a ſupper at that Ambaſſador's. There was but very little company here, and only a private party compoſed of a dozen perſons belonging to the court, very young and very showy, who were the next day to dance a *quadrille* at his ball. D'Olbreuſe was one of the dancers. I at firſt felt a ſort of embarraſſment, on finding myſelf in this ſmall circle, to which I was quite a ſtranger. D'Olbreuſe had brought me hither, without appriſing me of this circumſtance. I had reckoned on a grand ſupper, and I was afraid of appearing

pearing out of my ſphere; but I was ſoon at my eaſe. D'Olbreuſe preſented me to every one in ſo graceful a manner, that I was received with the moſt favourable prepoſſeſſion.

It was declared that, after ſupper, there ſhould be a rehearſal of the *quadrille*. The Count de ***, one of the dancers, was wanting. At ten o'clock he ſent an apology to ſay that he could not come. The women were exceedingly mortified at not having it in their power to rehearſe the dance. D'Olbreuſe aſſerted that I could ſupply the place of the Count de ***, and I would learn the figure *in a minute*. He added, that no one of the company danced like me. It was in vain that I proteſted I had forgotten my dancing, from being ſo long in the country; it was decided that I ſhould dance all the evening; and we ſat down to table in high ſpirits. The prettieſt woman of the party, Madame de C****, made me place myſelf

ſelf beſide her. Her manners, in general, had at firſt diſpleaſed me; I had found in them a diſguſting coquetry; but when ſhe ſeemed no longer to think of any one but me, my vanity made me more indulgent. She is witty, gay, and uncommonly ſhrewd; ſhe ſoon appeared to me a charming woman; I felt a wiſh to pleaſe her, and I naturally aſſumed a manner ſimilar to her own. On riſing from table, I gladly ſuffered myſelf to be hurried into a cabinet, in order to learn there the figure of the *quadrille*; I exerted, in this important ſtudy, the greateſt application, and when I knew all that could be taught me, I was ſeized with a violent palpitation of the heart, occaſioned by the ſole idea of the ſucceſs that I was on the point of obtaining.

It is not, in the firſt inſtance, by deſtroying principles that the world ſpoils young men; it is by rendering them puerile and frivolous; it is not by corrupting the mind, it is by narrowing it; it is, in ſhort,

by

by profaning the lively emotions which ſenſibility alone ought to inſpire, and which are excited in company only through vanity. Our ſentiments are much leſs to be feared than our ſenſations; of theſe we may know the inconveniences; their importance, their continuity even affords means of combating them, and of triumphing over them after long efforts: but how guard againſt the danger of ſenſations, inceſſantly reviving and always unforeſeen, which leave no trace in the heart, and which make us experience only an agreeable confuſion, without occaſioning us the torments and violent agitations of the paſſions?

I was far from making theſe reflections in rehearſing the quadrille at the Spaniſh Ambaſſador's. I burnt with impatience to rejoin the company, in order to *ſhine* in their eyes; and, above all, in thoſe of Madame de C****. However, I re-entered the drawing room with the moſt cool

cool and moſt modeſt air that it was poſſible for me to aſſume. Taking the Count de ***'s place, I naturally became Madame de C****'s partner. I was ſo agitated, that I trembled in taking her by the hand: ſhe perceived it and ſmiled; I underſtood that ſhe attributed this movement to a more intereſting cauſe; and I was not ſorry for this, for I ſhould have bluſhed, had ſhe divined my thoughts. I danced in my beſt manner; and that frivolous talent gave me, in this company, a *real conſequence*. Madame de C****, who till then had only coquetted with me, aſſumed a deportment more ſerious and more expreſſive; enchanted at the effect that I produced, and at the encomiums which were laviſhed on me, I anſwered her advances in ſuch a manner as to perſuade her that I was extremely flattered by them. She invited me to come to her houſe: I promiſed I would;—ſhe then propoſed to me to accept a ticket for the

next

next day's ball, and to this I readily conſented.

However, the reflections of the night made me change my reſolution, and I wrote to d'Olbreuſe that I would not go to the ball; but we ſupped together at his father's; he preſſed me to keep my promiſe; and, after a great deal of reſiſtance, I ſet out with him for the ball. We arrived at the Ambaſſador's at one o'clock in the morning. D'Olbreuſe was dreſſed for the *quadrille*; as for me, I had on my plain coat; and, knowing very few people, I was without a maſk. We at firſt went into a ſmall private room, where all the dancers of the *quadrille* had engaged to meet. We found them in the greateſt agitation, becauſe the Marquis de ****, one of the dancers, had ſprained his ancle an hour before, in opening the ball with the Ambaſſador's niece. As ſoon as I appeared, there aroſe an almoſt general exclamation of joy. I was received as a *deliverer*;

deliverer; I was become a very important perſonage, I was going to determine whether or not the *quadrille* was to be danced. Madame de C**** came up to me, and entreated me to take the place of the Marquis de ****. But, in very good earneſt, I was poſitively decided to have nothing to do with it; I thought it ridiculous to make my entry into the faſhionable world as a dancer, and I flatly refuſed. The company were thrown into conſternation, with the exception of one of the performers of the quadrille, whoſe face was unknown to me, and who, for that very reaſon, I imagined muſt be the Count de***. It was he, in fact: he is a nobleman of high rank, ſpoiled by the women, and by the great favour which he enjoys at court. While every one was entreating me, in the moſt earneſt manner to dance, he was careleſly ſeated between two windows on a marble ſlab, with a looking glaſs behind him. He turned about

from time to time to adjuſt his head-dreſs; this occupation he interrupted only to play with a large curtain taſſel, which he threw over his head and caught again very dexterouſly. This perſon diſpleaſed and ſhocked me; I looked on his foolery as affectation; it ſeemed to me, that it was a pretext to diſpenſe with ſpeaking to me as all the others did; I judged that this man was an arrogant coxcomb, and I felt the moſt eager deſire to obtain from him a ſomewhat pointed rudeneſs, in order to have the happy privilege of retaliating. I muſt own all; d'Olbreuſe had told me that this perſonage was the lover of Madame de C****, and that evening Madame de C****, habited as a Peruvian, adorned with dazzling jewels and waving feathers, ſeemed to be the queen of the ball. Bating ingenuouſneſs ſhe was *Zilia*; but who ever looked or wiſhed for ſimplicity and candour at a maſquerade?

When

When I had, as I have juſt ſaid, reſiſted, with ſtoic firmneſs, the entreaties of ſix pretty women, Madame de C****, diſconſolate, turned her back on me with vexation, and approaching the Count: "Confeſs," ſaid ſhe, "that it is dreadful!" —"What?" anſwered he, without looking at her, and ſtill playing with the taſſel of the curtains ..... "How," rejoined ſhe, "you "have not heard our clamours, our vain "ſupplications?" ..... At this queſtion, the Count made no anſwer; but ſhrugged up his ſhoulders, got off the ſlab, and turning towards the other women: "La- "dies," ſaid he, "have you any commands "for me?" ..... "But what madneſs, "are you going away?"—"I am going "to quit this buſtle."—"There's no "longer any hope then?" exclaimed Ma- dame de C**** in a ſorrowful voice.— "It ſeems to me," rejoined the Count in a tart tone, "that the gentleman (pointing "to me) has juſt irrevocably deprived you "of the ſmalleſt." I had a great mind

to apply then the rudeneſs which I wiſhed to introduce: D'Olbreuſe did not leave me ſufficient time: "Come, come," cried he, "let us make a final effort." At theſe words I was ſurrounded, and the former perſecution recommenced, with the exception of the Count, who, on this occaſion, went to the chimney and began to ſtir the fire. As I ſaw, beyond all poſſibility of doubt, that he was extremely deſirous I ſhould not make one of the *quadrille*, that idea alone determined me, and I conſented. This was a real diſplay of ſtage effect. D'Olbreuſe led me away inſtantly, in order to make me put on the Marquis de ****'s dreſs. I then returned in triumph to the drawing-room, I took my partner, and, without any farther delay, we repaired to the ball room. I enjoyed Madame de C****'s gratitude and that of her companions, and, above, all the Count de ***'s ill humour. As ſoon as we appeared in the great room we were, according to cuſtom, exceſſively applaud-

ed;

ed; a *quadrille*, which ſuſpends all the other dances, diſpleaſed every one; and very much envied if it be pretty, criticized in whiſpers, it is always received with great acclamations. The orcheſtra was ſilent on our approach; all the dancers, with as much eagerneſs as regret, made way for us; a circle was formed round us; we were promiſed admiration; but we knew that we were going to be minutely examined, and judged with ſeverity..... In the courſe of the life of a coxcomb, or of a coquette, there are ſcarcely any moments more ſolemn and more awful than theſe.

From the firſt beginning of the *quadrille* I ſaw that the Count was one of thoſe laborious dancers who have ſweated prodigiouſly in order to dance well; but who, deſtitute of grace and eaſe, can execute only a few difficult ſteps which betray a laborious exertion, and prove nothing more than a ridiculous ſtudy and a miſplaced perſeverance. He made prodigi-

ous efforts to ſurpaſs me; but it was thought that I danced better than he; and this was ſaid in ſo loud a tone, and ſo univerſally, that he could not be deceived in that reſpect.

When our ballet was over, the Count, who was in a profuſe perſpiration, precipitately retired; my partner and Madame de C**** propoſed to me to take a turn round the ball room; I gave them my arm, and we had much difficulty to make our way through the crowd that collected round us, in order to follow Madame de C****, whoſe dreſs and beauty fixed every eye. There is a ſort of intoxicating charm in public encomiums; nothing renders them ſuſpected; they are always true and diſintereſted; the effect which Madame de C**** produced, fired my imagination; I was proud of talking to her and giving her my arm; I looked at her with admiration; it ſeemed to me that I diſcovered in her a thouſand new charms. Amid the exclama-

exclamations that ſhe excited, ſhe had an excellent deportment, which added infinitely to her graces; a gentle fluſh animated her complexion; a ſlight embarraſſment was painted on her brow, and her timid and abſent looks appeared to expreſs only the wiſh of ſhunning ſo many homages. I have remarked that, in young women of this claſs, the agreeable emotions of gratified vanity give every appearance of baſhfulneſs and modeſty.

After having met with general approbation, Madame de C **** ſtopped before a bench and ſat down. A minute after, ſhe was ſurrounded by a group of young fellows of her acquaintance. D'Olbreuſe was no longer there; I was not acquainted with one of theſe men; the converſation entirely compoſed of little private alluſions, inſtantly took a turn abſolutely enigmatical to me; I felt myſelf uncomfortably ſituated; it ſeemed to me that, in the midſt of this volatile and noiſy troop, I had an

awkward and countrified air; my coat even, which was attentively examined, contributed to my embarraſſment, ſo that I quickly reſolved to tear myſelf from the preſence of Madame de C****.

It was three o'clock in the morning; I ought to have gone to bed, and then nothing of all that I have experienced would have happened! You would have ſeen me return at the expiration of a few months; Pauline would not have made a journey to Paris; never would the lighteſt cloud have obſcured our repoſe and happineſs; my conſcience would not reproach me with any thing!.... Who could have believed that ſo frivolous a piece of levity ſhould occaſion ſuch great changes in the deſtiny of ſeveral perſons!

I ſhall not impute it to *my ſtar*; ah! it is our ſentiments and our principles that decide our fate! true *fatality* depends on our voluntary weakneſs!

I re-

I remained at the ball, becauſe a ſecret charm detained me there; moved by the dancing, by the muſic, by ſo many faſcinating objects, I yielded to new ſenſations of the danger of which no culpable project made me ſenſible; I was not in love; I formed no ſort of plan; but I wiſhed to devote this night to pleaſure. A certain undeſcribable taſte for intrigues and romantic adventures, which balls naturally inſpire, gave me a paſſionate wiſh to diſguiſe myſelf, and to go, under an *impenetrable dreſs*, and ſurpriſe, occupy and intereſt Madame de C****. In two minutes, I was equipped; I put myſelf in maſquerade from head to foot, and I returned to look for Madame de C****. She was ſtill on the ſame ſeat; and, at the moment when I approached her, I perceived the Count de ***, in a black domino, but unmaſked, who advanced and ſat down cloſe beſide her. Madame de C**** had now near her only two or

three young men, and the lady with whom I had danced. I placed myſelf behind the latter, waiting for a more favourable moment; and, without any notice being taken of me, I diſtinctly heard the following dialogue between the Count de ***, the Chevalier de B****, Madame de C**** and my partner.

You know the fidelity of my memory; ſo you may rely on the perfect correctneſs of this account. I was very attentive, and I have not forgotten a ſingle ſyllable.

The Count. Well, Madam, what have you done then with the fine recruit with whom you honoured our *quadrille?*

Madame de C. Do you mean the Marquis d'Erneville?

The Count. (*Smiling diſdainfully.*) The *Marquis* d'Erneville!....

The Chevalier de B. What! That capital dancer is the Marquis d'Erneville? Is he the grand-ſon of the Marſhal?

The Count. (*Still ſmiling, and playing with*

with Madame C.'s fan.) Ah! not exactly ſo.....

Madame de C. I beg your pardon; he is the ſon and heir of the Counteſs d'Erneville, who married in Burgundy. The Chevalier d'Olbreuſe told me ſo.....

My Partner. And he told me ſo too.

The Count. (*Yawning, and affecting indifference and abſence.*) D'Olbreuſe is an aſtoniſhing fellow.....

Madame de C. In what then?

The Count. (*With the ſame affected careleſſneſs.*) He has, as in this inſtance, now and then ſurpriſing predilections, and ſtrange people under his wing.....

Madame de C. I aſſure you that you are miſtaken. This young man belongs to the d'Erneville family.

The Count. (*Coolly and ironically.*) I dare aſſure you, Madam, that I am not miſtaken. *This young man* is not related to the d'Ernevilles....

Madame de C. But what is he then?

The Count. Do you order me to tell you without reſerve?

Madame de C. Why then ſhould any be neceſſary?

The Count. Well, Madam, this young man is a baſtard of the Counteſs Dowager d'Erneville?

Here, as you may believe, my reſpectable mother, I was very much tempted to give the impudent calumniator a box on the ear; but I contrived to keep my temper, and I had the patience to wait for the end of this dialogue, which continued as follows:

Madam de C. and my Partner. (*At the ſame time.*) What nonſenſe!

Madame de C. You have got hold of the ſtrangeſt ſtory!.....

The Chevalier. And why then go by the name of d'Erneville?

The Count. Becauſe his mother made him a preſent of the d'Erneville eſtate.

The

The Chevalier. And what was his father?

The Count. (*Yawning, ſtretching himſelf out, and ſtill playing with the fan.*) A coachman, a poſtilion, or ſomething of that kind.....

Madame de C. What a ſtory!..... But it is not to be ſuppoſed that the Chevalier d'Olbreuſe would have brought ſuch a creature to ſup at the Spaniſh Ambaſſador's.

The Count. *Creature*, as you very juſtly obſerve....

My Partner. It is impoſſible. He has ſuch gentleman-like manners.....

Madame de C. And ſuch perfect good-breeding.....

The Count. I ſee, ladies, that you have *fathomed* him.

Madame de C. I ſay again, the Chevalier d'Olbreuſe would not introduce into company an improper character.

The Count. Why not? It is *a creation*..... D'Olbreuſe ſuſpects nothing: it is

in

in his way..... In fact, to enrapture the prettieſt woman in Paris, by producing the provincial uſurper of the name of d'Erneville, appears to me a good joke.

The Chevalier de B. What is very certain, is that he has a graceful carriage, and dances delightfully.

The Count. Delightfully?

The Chevalier. Certainly.

The Count. But he does not know how to dance, he does not know a ſtep.....

The Chevalier. I am not a connoiſſeur in dancing; but I own to you that he delighted me; and I ſaw all the ſpectators give into this opinion.

The Count. All? that's ſaying a great deal.

The Chevalier. Oh! I except you....

Madame de C. (*Laughs.*)

The Count. Chevalier, I inform you that you have juſt ſaid a good thing, Madame de C. laughed.

Madame

Madame de C. Oh! that's not a proof, for I laugh ſometimes at what you ſay.

The Count. (*Exceſſively piqued*) What, Madam?.....

The Chevalier. (*To the Count.*) I hint to you that Madame de C**** has juſt made an epigram.....

The Count. I am not very fond of hints.

The Chevalier. Why then do you give them?

The Count. It is greatneſs of mind; *I give*, but I will not *receive*.....

The Chevalier. You *will* not?

In this part of the dialogue, I was afraid that the quarrel between the Count and the Chevalier would become ſerious, and, in order to draw off their attention, I pretended to ſleep, and I began to ſnore as loud as I could. What I had foreſeen happened; they turned about, burſt out a laughing, and talked of ſomething elſe. Some one came and begged Madame de C**** to dance; ſhe refuſed. The ſame

ſame maſk aſked her female companion, who conſented. The Chevalier de B*** followed them, ſo that Madame de C**** remained alone with the Count on the ſeat. I then got up, and went and ſeated myſelf beſide of the Count. He turned about, and looking at me with the ironical, indolent and impertinent air, which is peculiar to himſelf: "My good friend in "the maſk," ſaid he to me, "I am afraid "of incommoding you." ..... My only anſwer was to pull him by the ſleeve, as if I wiſhed to whiſper in his ear, "Oh! ho!" continued he, "a ſecret?" I gave a nod; he leant towards me, and I ſaid to him in a whiſper, but very diſtinctly, theſe words: "*You are a fool, a coxcomb, and a cowardly* "*calumniator; if you are not an arrant* "*poltroon, repair in a few minutes to the* "*end of the room, to the great buffet;* "*there you will find me.*"

This ſpeech excited not the ſlighteſt alteration in the immoveable face of the Count:

Count: there is no one, I believe, but a conſummate courtier who can have ſuch a command over himſelf. "Very well, my "good friend in the maſk," ſaid he to me; "but, with your leave, we will reſume "this converſation ſome other time." At theſe words I roſe up, and walked away. I went to the buffet, and, in the courſe of a quarter of an hour, I ſaw the Count arrive; I advanced towards him, ſaying to him, "*Here I am.*"—"Come," anſwered he, "you will admit that it is neceſſary, "however, I ſhould know with whom I "I have got to deal; who are you?"—"I am neither a *baſtard*, nor the *ſon of a* "*coachman.*"....."Ah! ah! you are a "liſtener?".....".Let us come to the "point; follow me."—"I might tell you "that, according to every rule of propriety, "it does not become me to grant the ſa-"tisfaction which you demand, except to a "gentleman or an officer; but I am not "difficult in this reſpect, and I will wil-

"lingly

" lingly fight you, ſince I have conſented " to dance with you."—" Let's loſe no " time, I ſay."—" Do you wiſh that we " ſhould be followed and ſeparated?"—" By no means."—" Well, wait then till " day-break; I have three engagements; " when I have danced theſe three cotilions, " I will repair to the *Champs Elyſées* near " the bowling green."—" I ſhall be " there."—" You may bring a ſervant, " I ſhall have one."—" That's enough." —" Adieu till we meet again." In ſaying theſe words he went away, and I ſoon loſt ſight of him. The perfect ſerenity of his countenance and deportment occaſioned me a ſort of ſpleen; I was angry that ſo deſpicable a coxcomb ſhould poſſeſs ſo cool a courage; but as *Favart* ſays:

" *Quel qu'il ſoit, un François ne peut manquer de cœur**."

I left the Count dancing with all his might. I went home; I put on a gray frock, and,

* Be what he may, a Frenchman cannot ſhrink.

followed

followed by Le Maire, I repaired to the *Champs Elyſées* at the moment when the day began to dawn. I waited only eight minutes; the Count arrived in a hired coach (I had come on foot); he had with him no one but his running-footman. "Apropos," ſaid he, coming up to me, "I "have brought only my ſword; you wiſh, "perhaps, to fight with piſtols?"—"No; "I ſhould probably have, in that way, "too great an advantage over you." (You know, my dear mother, what a markſman I am with a piſtol.)—"For my part, I am "a very bad ſhot." rejoined the Count; "but ſtill I leave you the choice."—"With ſwords"—"With ſwords let it "be."—At theſe words, he drew his ſword with very good grace, ſaying: "Are you "ready?" ..... He fences as he dances, with far too much exertion; at the expiration of ſome minutes I wounded him in the arm; ſeeing his blood flow, I ſtopped:

ſtopped: "You are wounded," ſaid I. On this, his running-footman made a movement, in order to approach: "Stay "in your place," cried he to him; "and "don't ſtir from it till one of us two has "fallen."

My anger was over; but his wound had juſt inflamed his. At this moment he fought with a blind fury, and, in the courſe of a few minutes, he ran himſelf through the body by advancing on my ſword, which entered very deep into his right ſide; he fell ſaying: "*It's all over!*" I thought that he was expiring; and what I experienced at the time is inexpreſſible. I haſtened towards him; he was ſenſeleſs. .... That face which I had deteſted a few minutes before, that face covered with the ſhades of death, oh! how affecting and terrible did it appear to me!.... His running-footman, Le Maire, and I, gave him all poſſible aſſiſtance. After having,

as

as well as we could, bound up his wound, we put him into his carriage..... I then hurried away from this fatal ſpot.... I returned home, overwhelmed by deſpair and remorſe.

I did not doubt that the unfortunate Count would die of his wound. This idea ſtruck me with horror; I was at a loſs why I had not deſpiſed a ſenſeleſs ſpeech, ſo devoid of foundation that it could affect neither your honour nor mine. It ſeemed to me that my attachment for you had, on this occaſion, been only the pretext for an inexcuſable fit of paſſion. I repeated to myſelf with terror: *I am a murderer!* .... and preſently I thought myſelf an *aſſaſſin*, on reflecting that, from the manner in which I fenced, I had by far too great an advantage over my unfortunate adverſary.

In this reproach of conſcience there was no exaggeration; in fact, is it not ſtrange that we ſhould think we are deficient in delicacy,

delicacy, and even in probity, in *not playing* on equal terms, and that we ſhould have no ſcruple of this kind when the life of our fellow-creature is concerned? If to *play*, with a certainty of *winning*, is cheating; is not to *fight*, with a certainty of *killing*, then alſo a crime, and moreover a piece of cowardice? Will it be ſaid that there is always chance in a duel? What is that? Is not there always chance too in all games of ſkill? And, for inſtance, at billiards, ſhould we excuſe a firſt-rate player who ſhould never play but on equal terms? From this ſole reaſon, duelling is always either an inconſiderate piece of cowardice of the moſt odious and moſt criminal nature, or elſe an extravagant and mad ſubmiſſion to impoſture.

Not only theſe new ideas chilled me with terror; but all the moſt known and moſt hackneyed reflections on the ferocity of duelling occaſioned me as much agitation and ſurpriſe, as if I had never ſuſpect-

ed that this action could be contrary to humanity. It is that, till then, I had thought of it but vaguely, and that alone is a great fault. It is impoſſible to be virtuous, when we have not profoundly reflected on all the principles of morality.

I paſſed the whole day ſhut up in my room; and, towards evening, I wrapped myſelf up in my great coat, and went on foot to the Count's, in order to inquire how he did. Without mentioning my name, as you may ſuppoſe, I queſtioned his porter, who told me nothing more than that the Count had had a fall from his horſe, from which he was in a dangerous way; but that, nevertheleſs, he was in his ſenſes.

The next morning at eleven o'clock, d'Olbreuſe entered my room ſaying to me: "Do you know that the Count de *** "fought a duel yeſterday with the Cheva- "lier de B****?"—"Who told you "that?" aſked I.—"It was Madame de "C****,

"C ****, whom I have this moment "left, and who is very much concerned." —"Why?"—"She was witneſs of the "quarrel between the Count and the Cheva- "lier at the ball." ...."But is the Count "dangerouſly wounded?"—"He is dy- "ing." At theſe words I fell into a chair putting my two hands to my face. The Chevalier, confounded, ſurveyed me in ſilence. I owned to him every thing, and after a few moments' reflection: "This "affair is very unlucky," ſaid he to me; "the Count's family is powerful and vin- "dictive; the Count is perſonally beloved "by the king, who, beſides, deteſts duelling; "he vowed, on the occaſion of the duel, "between the Duke de **** and the "Marquis de ***, to make an example "of the firſt duelliſts who ſhould meet in "his dominions; and indeed, within theſe "three years, people dare no longer fight "in France; all our young men go to the "frontier (to Quiévrain) to terminate their

"diſputes.

" diſputes . . . . . But, by good luck, the " Count, either through ſelf-love or ge- " neroſity, has not yet mentioned your " name; no one in the world ſuſpects " you. You told Madame de C * * * * " that you intended to take a trip to Lon- " don, and here's what I propoſe to you. " Madame de S * * * * is at Senlis, where " ſhe is to paſs the year of her mourning, " (her old huſband had died a fortnight " before the Spaniſh ambaſſador's ball.) " I am going thither this evening, and I " ſhall remain there three weeks; I will " take you with me, if you pleaſe, and pre- " ſent you to Madame de S * * * *, as my " young brother who is in the navy, and " whom ſhe has never ſeen. I will ſay that " he muſt be *incog.* becauſe he is come " without leave. You are not known " there, I ſhall myſelf be there with a ſort " of myſtery, ſince decency does not allow " that I ſhould be received openly. Be- " ſides, Madame de S * * * * will ſee no

" company, ſhe herſelf will be ignorant
" of your ſecret, you will be perfectly
" concealed in her houſe, and you will
" there wait the event. The phyſicians
" have given over the Count; yet, as
" they ſay that the illneſs will be of long du-
" ration, it is poſſible that he may recover.
" In that caſe, you will return hither, and
" if he dies you will croſs over to England,
" where every one thinks you are already;
" for you muſt ſay, in quitting your lodg-
" ings, that you are ſetting out for Lon-
" don." After ſome difficulties, I accept-
ed this propoſal. Every thing was exe-
cuted as I have juſt deſcribed, the Cheva-
lier, not chooſing to take his *valet-de-cham-
bre*, who knew me, took with him only a
new ſervant. I took Le Maire on whom
I could rely, and who was thoroughly in-
ſtructed in what he had to ſay.

Till now you have, no doubt, imagined,
my dear and tender friend, that *my con-
feſſions* would be confined to entruſting

to

to you an intrigue with Madame de C****, and my duel with the Count. This would be ſtill far too much for your adopted ſon, for your pupil, and for the huſband of Pauline; but would to heaven that I had nothing more ſerious to reveal to you!.... Ah! I do not exaggerate my fault; it is enormous, and it is irreparable.

We ſet out for Senlis on the 16th of May. Six or ſeven hours previous to our departure, the Chevalier had diſpatched a meſſenger to Madame de S**** to apprize her that he ſhould bring with him his brother *Henri d'Elvas*; ſo we were expected. We arrived at eight o'clock in the evening; it had been for a week paſt as cold as in the month of November; we were but very thinly clothed; we were benumbed with cold; and I experienced a very agreeable ſenſation on entering into an extremely elegant houſe, in which all

the fires were lighted. We were conducted into a delightful drawing-room, and there, a *valet-de-chambre* ſaid a word in the ear of the Chevalier, who afterwards repeated to me, in a whiſper, that Madame de S**** wiſhed firſt to ſee him for a moment in private, which appeared to me natural enough. He left the room, and I remained alone; I was warming myſelf when, at the expiration of a few minutes, the door flew open again, and I diſcovered a figure truly divine: it was a young girl dreſſed in white, who, on perceiving me, made a little movement of ſurpriſe and fright, then advanced towards me, with a timid air, at the ſame time making me a low curtſey. I contemplated her with extreme aſtoniſhment, not being able to believe, from her youth, that it was Madame de S****; ſhe approached a ſmall table, opened a drawer, took out a book, raiſed on me the moſt beautiful eyes in the world, and, ſtruck by

my

my ſtupified air, gave a ſmile full of ſweetneſs and candour, accompanied by a ſecond curtſey, and then, with the nimbleneſs of the graces, ſhe inſtantly diſappeared.

A moment after, Madame de S**** entered with the Chevalier. She has a countenance extremely agreeable; but, after the object that I had juſt ſeen, ſhe ſcarcely appeared to me pretty. I had a great mind to interrogate her reſpecting my charming viſion; however, as I doubted not that ſhe was living in the houſe, and that I ſhould ſee her again at ſupper, I would not interrupt the converſation in order to aſk any queſtions on this head; I talked, and I liſtened with great abſence of mind; every ſlight noiſe, every movement that I heard in the antichamber made me turn my head towards the door, but no one came; we ſat down to table, I ſaw only three covers. Then I loſt all hope of ſatisfying my curioſity for that evening,

for a ſort of embarraſſment, the reaſon of which I could not account for to myſelf, prevented me from aſking, in a direct manner, who this young girl was. It ſeemed to me that a queſtion, ſo long deferred, would appear extraordinary. I tried to baniſh from my imagination this too ſtriking idea..... Madame de S****, naturally obliging, was particularly ſo to me, thinking me brother to the Chevalier. She told me that the latter had very frequently ſpoken to him of me, and that even he had communicated to her my letters; and, on this, ſhe embarraſſed me much by all the encomiums which ſhe beſtowed on my ſtyle of writing. You will ſee in the ſequel that this detail was not uſeleſs.

At eleven o'clock I thought that it was prudent to leave together two lovers who appeared to be extravagantly fond of each other, and I went to bed.

I awoke

I awoke the next morning very early; and I ſaw, with pleaſure, on opening my windows, which looked towards the garden, that the weather had become fine again. I dreſſed myſelf in haſte, and went down into the garden. On leaving the parterre, I entered into a long covered walk, at the end of which ſtood a pavilion. Half way down the walk, I heard with ſurprize the harmonious ſounds of a delightful voice accompanied by a piano-forte.....I doubled my pace. The ſinging proceeded from the pavilion; I ſtopped at the door. There was a momentary ſilence; then a voice, as youthful as it was clear and brilliant, ſang the following *romance:*

What bliſs has fate for me in ſtore?
I've ſeen the youth whom I adore;
My heart long wiſh'd the choice to make;
It wiſh'd, but fear'd ſome ſad miſtake.
What anxious moments have I paſs'd!
But, thanks to love, he comes at laſt.
Then do I dream; or ſhall I ſee
This youth beſtow his heart on me?

O! inſtinct ſweet! O! gentle flame!
How often, in my lover's name,
My heart has whiſper'd, "There's a tie
"That cauſes maids to wiſh and ſigh!"
Love's magic pow'r ſubdues my breaſt:
I gueſs'd the truth, I hope the reſt.
Then do I dream; or ſhall I ſee
This youth beſtow his heart on me?

Theſe words, and the raviſhing voice that ſang them, threw me into an inexpreſſible agitation. It ſeemed to me that this voice could belong only to the angelic creature whom I had ſeen the preceding evening. As for the words, I could neither comprehend them entirely, nor perſuade myſelf that they had not ſome reference to me ..... I was bewildered in theſe thoughts, when the door of the pavilion opened, and I ſaw the charming ſtranger advance. She appeared to me, in broad day-light, a thouſand times more beautiful and more dazzling than the evening before. She ſaluted me with a bluſh. I was at the bottom of the ſteps, ſeven of which,

which, of a tolerable height, ſeparated us; ſhe leant againſt the wall of the door, and fixing on me two large dark blue eyes, the moſt piercing and the moſt affecting that I ever ſaw, "*Yes!*" ſaid ſhe..... This word, pronounced with an enchanting and ſublime expreſſion, made me tremble. Her beautiful eyes were filled with tears, and immediately putting her finger on her mouth, in a childiſh manner, the grace of which it is impoſſible to deſcribe, ſhe continued thus: "But don't tell any one that "you have ſeen me..... don't ſpeak of "me to any perſon whatever, without ex- "ception, not even to your brother: Do "you promiſe me this?"..... "Your "commands are laws," replied I, ſtammering..... "That's enough," rejoined ſhe, "adieu!" In ſaying theſe words, ſhe cleared, at a ſingle jump, the ſeven ſteps of the pavilion, and ſetting out in a run, with the lightneſs and ſwiftneſs of Atalante, I ſoon loſt ſight of her. I remained like a

ſtatue..... An emotion ſo lively, that it was painful on that account, almoſt entirely took away my breath. I was obliged to ſit down on the ſteps, but the ſtone was burning hot.....

A fatal charm, attached to this place, ſuſpended in me every ſort of reflection; I ſaw but one object, I recollected but one ſingle word; that faſcinating *yes* was conſtantly ringing in my ear, and, ſo far was my perſeverance in retracing to myſelf theſe images from weakening their impreſſion, that the more I thought of them, the more agitation they occaſioned me. At length I roſe up, and it was only to enter into this pavilion..... The ſight of the piano-forte made me experience an inexpreſſible ſenſation. I thought I heard a ſecond time that *romance*, all the words of which were for ever engraved in my memory. ..... There was by the ſide of the piano-forte a pot of myrtle and a few books; I opened one of theſe volumes, it was

Rouſſeau's *Nouvelle Héloïſe*. This made on me a ſingular impreſſion, which, for ſome moments, reſtored me to myſelf. At the age of fifteen or ſixteen, thought I, to have read this dangerous book..... So then, her heart already led aſtray by her imagination, no longer follows the ſole impulſions of ſentiment and nature..... She may not yet be corrupted; but ſhe no longer has the ingenuous ſimplicity of fifteen; ſhe no longer has the innocence of her age; and what a charm loſt!..... This reflection ſuddenly recalled Pauline to my remembrance; my tears flowed, and the magic illuſion of Armida's palace immediately vaniſhed..... At this moment I heard the Chevalier's voice at a diſtance.

I haſtily roſe up, in order to join him; it ſeemed to me that he would have divined my thoughts, had he ſuprized me in this pavilion. Notwithſtanding my exceſſive curioſity, I came to the reſolution of not

ſpeaking to the Chevalier of the fair ſtranger. I had promiſed it; I was faithful to my word; but I thought I might aſk Madame de S**** whether ſhe had an agreeable neighbourhood. She anſwered me that, occupying this houſe only ſince her widowhood, ſhe was not acquainted with any one of her neighbours, and ſhe abſolutely ſaw no company. This anſwer ſtill increaſed my aſtoniſhment. Who then was this dangerous *incognita*? How could ſhe introduce herſelf ſo familiarly into a ſtrange houſe? Whence aroſe her prepoſſeſſion in my favour? And what meant the extraordinary myſtery of her conduct? It was impoſſible for me to form in this reſpect a ſingle conjecture that was probable; but I promiſed myſelf to take advantage of the firſt opportunity of coming to an explanation with her, in order to inform her that I was no longer free. This determination tranquillized me but too much; it authorized me to wiſh

wiſh to ſee her again!..... I ought, without delay, to have written to her, and to have given her my letter on her firſt momentary appearance; but I ſaid to myſelf that, to take this deciſive ſtep, it was neceſſary that ſhe ſhould explain herſelf ſtill more clearly, and that there would be, on my part, a ridiculous ſelf-conceit in haſtening to interpret ſeriouſly what might, perhaps, be no more than a ſimple piece of coquetry.

The next morning, as ſoon as I was dreſſed, I repaired, with eagerneſs and without remorſe, to the pavilion, ſaying to myſelf: *I will abſolutely have an explanation with her!* However, on approaching the pavilion, my ideas became ſtrangely perplexed; and a violent palpitation of the heart made me feel that *this virtuous reſolution* might be attended with ſome danger. I trembled as I entered the pavilion; but I found no one there..... I approached the piano, and I perceived that the myrtle

myrtle was cut . . . . . I looked about with attention, and I ſaw a crown of myrtle ſkilfully made. On taking it in my hand, I threw down a little bit of paper, which I picked up, on which were written theſe words: "*For him!*" . . . . I haſtened to put the crown on the piano, I tore the paper, I put the pieces in my pocket, and I went out of this enchanted pavilion . . . . . .

On that day I had ſent Le Maire to Paris to inquire how the Count did, and to fetch my letters; for I had given orders at my lodgings for their being carried to the Hôtel d'Olbreuſe. Le Maire did not return till midnight. I was ſtill in the drawing-room, where Madame de S**** had detained me; there were no letters for me, and I learnt that the Count continued in the ſame ſtate.

I went to bed at a quarter before one in the morning. You know that my ſervants never ſit up for me. I had to croſs an immenſe gallery, in order to go to my

room; the lamps were gone out; I was creeping along in the dark, when I heard the ruſtling of a ſilk gown. I ſtopped to liſten better, and, thirty paces from me, at the end of the gallery, I beheld my charming Sylphid! .... A ſmall lantern, which ſhe carried in one hand, perfectly lighted her enchanting face; in the other, ſhe held the crown of myrtle which I had ſeen in the pavilion; ſhe ſtopped, ſaying, *Henri!* ..... I anſwered only by an exclamation; then ſhewing me the crown of myrtle: "Is it through diſdain," continued ſhe, "that you left it?" ..... "O God!" replied I, "could you ſuppoſe" ..... "Well," interrupted ſhe, "receive it!" In pronouncing theſe words, ſhe threw me the crown. An involuntary and mechanical movement made me catch at it in the air. .... At this moment a pure and light breath extinguiſhed the lantern; I found myſelf again involved in total darkneſs, and I heard nothing more .....

I entered

I entered my chamber, and when, by the light of my night-lamp, I caſt my eyes on the crown which I had in my hand, I trembled!....." I have then accepted "it!" exclaimed I; "and this is not an "equivocal proof, it is a pledge of love! "..... This imprudent and romantic "young girl may imagine that I have "entered into an engagement to return "her paſſion!" This idea terrified me to ſuch a degree, that I tried to perſuade myſelf that every thing which had paſſed might yet be conſidered but as ſport, and that people do not ſeriouſly engage themſelves by looks and emblems.

I had placed the crown on a table; but it was impoſſible for me to view it with tranquillity. This ſight excited within me a confuſion mixed with remorſe, which agitated me in ſo unpleaſant a manner, that I reſolved to burn ſo dangerous a gift. I lighted the fire, and put the crown in it with as much pride as if I had made an heroic

heroic ſacrifice. Thus reconciled with myſelf, I went to bed; I ſlept little during this night: the object that had ſeized on my imagination, beſieged me without intermiſſion ..... In my ſleep, ſhe appeared to me under the elegant and light form of an aërial divinity; when awake, I ſaw her again under the ſame features; and, ever full of her image, I could not, in thinking of her, diſtinguiſh the illuſion from the reality.

As ſoon as I perceived the firſt rays of light I got up; a ſecret expectation, which I did not avow to myſelf, inſpired me with a vague uneaſineſs, and an extreme impatience to begin the day, and, above all, to leave my chamber.

I had nearly dreſſed myſelf, without having called Le Maire, who was ſtill aſleep, when in an adjoining cabinet, from which I was ſeparated only by a partition, I heard a guitar ſweetly reſound..... There was a charming prelude which laſted

laſted for a few minutes, then the melodious and penetrating voice of the moſt faſcinating of ſyrens ſang this burden of the *romance:*

" Then do I dream; or ſhall I ſee
" This youth beſtow his heart on me?"

After having twice repeated theſe words, ſhe ceaſed to ſing and play on the guitar. ..... In an ecſtaſy, I took up my flute, which, unfortunately, lying on my table, was cloſe at hand, and I played this air of Philidor, the well-known words of which begin thus:

" *Amour! amour! quelle eſt donc ta puiſſance**!"....

As I was finiſhing the tune, Le Maire entered my room. The ſight of him occaſioned me a ſort of turn in my blood; it brought back to my mind a confuſed idea of Erneville, Pauline, and all the cheriſhed objects that I had recently for-

* O! love! love! how great is thy power!

gotten.

gotten..... The fatal flute dropped from my hands, and, of the inconceivable emotion which I had juſt experienced, there remained only a painful aſtoniſhment.

A ſincere repentance abſolutely deprived me of the wiſh of again beholding my charming viſion; become ſenſible of my weakneſs, I was even afraid of meeting once more this dangerous *incognita*; I wanted to meditate, to compoſe myſelf, and to come, in ſhort, to a deciſive reſolution. My agitation could not be calmed in this apartment, where I had juſt ſeen and heard her; I would not go into the garden; I durſt not even croſs the gallery: I therefore went and ſhut myſelf into Le Maire's room, and I there wholly abandoned myſelf to reflections which I had not yet made but in a vague manner.

She is but fifteen or ſixteen, ſaid I to myſelf; do I mean then to act the part of a vile ſeducer! She believes that I am the brother of the Chevalier; ſhe takes me for

for *Henri d'Elvas*, ſhe believes me to be free!.... and I, a married man, I the huſband of an incomparable woman, ſhall I take advantage of the error of a child! ..... ſhall I diſhonour at once the beneficent adoption which conſtitutes my happineſs, the education I have received, and the reſpectable profeſſion I have choſen?..... No; I muſt tear myſelf away from the preſtiges that ſurround me, I muſt, without delay, quit this dangerous abode..... But who is the inconceivable being whoſe manners are ſo dignified, whoſe beauty is ſo ſtriking, and whoſe underſtanding and talents are ſo brilliant and captivating?..... How can ſhe be unknown? How can ſhe introduce herſelf here, and at all hours?.... Ah! what is it to me! the queſtion is not to know her; the queſtion, on the contrary, is to fly from her and forget her!.....

I fixed on this reſolution, and, in fact, that very day I declared to the Chevalier that

that I was determined to ſet out the next morning for England. He was ſurpriſed and concerned at this ſudden intention; but Madame de S**** formally oppoſed it; however, ſeeing that all her entreaties were uſeleſs, ſhe contented herſelf with conjuring me to defer my departure for one day only. "'Tis to-morrow my "*fête* *?" added ſhe; "I know that the "Chevalier means to celebrate it, and "every thing will be wanting, if you are "not here. I therefore inſiſt on your "granting me one day more; you ſhall ſet "off the day after to-morrow, if you "chooſe."

* In France, children, when baptized, take the chriſtian name of their godfather or godmother, which is generally that of ſome ſaint; and the day of the Romiſh calendar correſponding thereto, is called their *fête*: this is kept as we keep a birth-day; and, on the day it falls, it is cuſtomary for a perſon's relations or friends to preſent a noſegay or ſome more ſubſtantial mark of friendſhip.—*Tranſlator.*

I thought

I thought that it was impoſſible to refuſe this requeſt, and I ſtaid. I ought to have pretended indiſpenſable buſineſs; what do I ſay? I ought to have ſet off on coming out of Le Maire's room; I ought, in ſhort, to have run the riſk of appearing fantaſtical and diſobliging rather than of expoſing myſelf to betray duties the moſt ſacred..... It is often by thus ſacrificing principles to empty rules of decorum, that we deviate from the paths of virtue.....

I impoſed on myſelf the law not to quit the Chevalier and Madame de S**** for a moment during this whole day. After dinner, we went on the terrace that ſurrounds the houſe. This terrace, which is exceſſively elevated, overlooked the whole garden. A very ſteep ſlope, covered with turf, ſeparated it from a vaſt parterre, at the end of which, for Madame de S****'s birth-day, was erected a wooden obeliſk placed there for a diſplay of archery at which Madame de S****'s

ſervants

ſervants and ourſelves were to exerciſe our dexterity the next day. There was even already placed on the obeliſk the target that was to ſerve as a mark. On the right of the parterre was a wood.

After we had walked on the terrace about half an hour, Madame de S**** ordered chairs to be brought, and we ſat down. At this moment the Chevalier gave a piercing ſhout, telling us to look towards the wood. I turned pale, and I coloured on diſcovering the *incognita*, although we ſaw only her back; ſhe was habited as a Diana; ſhe had on a magnificent dreſs, white and green embroidered with gold; a diamond girdle marked her waiſt, the elegance of which can be compared only to that of Pauline; her beautiful hair, which was of an extreme fineneſs and of a ſhining black, was plaited and interwoven with pearls; ſhe carried on her left ſhoulder a light quiver, and in her hand

hand ſhe held a bow. She walked majeſtically, ſtill turning her back to us; ſhe ſtopped a hundred yards from the obeliſk; ſhe then drew an arrow from her quiver; ſhe ſtretched her bow, and, with wonderful grace and ſkill, ſhe ſhot the arrow into the centre ſpot in the target. The firſt movement of all us three was to applaud with exclamation; and the Chevalier, equally enraptured and ſurpriſed, quitted us abruptly in order to have a cloſe view of this charming divinity; but ſhe eſcaped his curioſity by a rapid flight; ſhe ſoon regained the wood, and diſappeared from our eyes.

The Chevalier, aſtoniſhed, came back out of breath, and abſolutely inſiſted on having this adventure cleared up. Madame de S**** proteſted that ſhe knew nothing of the matter; ſhe called all her ſervants, and they all betrayed the ſame ignorance. While all this was paſſing, my imagination became exalted, and my reaſon gave way

to

to ſo much ſeduction; nevertheleſs, I ſtill preſerved enough to be ſenſible of all my danger, and to perſiſt in my reſolution. During all the reſt of the day, I quitted not Madame de S**** for a ſingle moment, and in the evening when I went to bed, I ordered Le Maire to attend me. On opening the door of my room, I congratulated myſelf inwardly, as when we have juſt eſcaped from the greateſt perils; but figure to yourſelf my ſurpriſe and agitation, on perceiving, on the wainſcot pannel oppoſite to me, an elegant trophy ſuſpended, with a garland of flowers, compoſed of a bow, a quiver, and my flute!.....

I was the more aſtoniſhed as I had all day had the key of my room in my pocket. ..... I could not miſtake the bow and the quiver which I had ſeen worn by the fair ſtranger, and I thought nothing more ingenious than her having united all theſe attributes of love to the flute which had replied to the burden of the *romance*.

I enjoined Le Maire the ſtricteſt ſecrecy reſpecting this incident; I untied the trophy, and I locked up in my trunk the bow and the quiver. You may well ſuppoſe that, during this night, I neither got ſleep nor reſt. My conſcience being quieted by my reſolutions, I abandoned myſelf without ſcruple to the dangerous charm of all the romantic ideas naturally ſuggeſted to me by this extraordinary adventure; my imagination became completely inflamed; and I fell into ſuch a delirium, that, in the middle of the night, I thought I heard the *romance* ſung!..... I ſoon knew that it was only an illuſion; but I got up, dreſſed myſelf, and paraded to and fro in my chamber. I conſtantly kept my eyes fixed on the partition of the cabinet..... the ſmalleſt noiſe of the wainſcoting made me ſtart!..... I then held my breath in order to liſten, I expected, I wiſhed, I feared, I had entirely ceaſed to

be

be in tune with myſelf!..... I ſaw day-light appear with a ſentiment of ſatisfaction mixed with confuſion and melancholy; a ſecret foreboding informed me that this day would be intereſting, and I ſighed in thinking that I was to ſet out the next morning!.....

I opened my window, and it was not without a lively emotion that I fixed my eyes on the obeliſk!.... This emotion increaſed with the progreſs of the light; as faſt as the ſhades of night were diſſipated, I diſcovered a thouſand new objects, which retraced to me the moſt dangerous recollections; the little wood, the pavilion, in ſhort, even the arrow ſtuck into the target!.... I was drawn from my reverie by an apparition as ſurpriſing as all the reſt. .... I ſaw all at once the *incognita* come out of the wood as the evening before, and advance towards the obeliſk; ſhe held in her hand ſeveral pebbles, which ſhe threw at the target till her arrow had fallen; ſhe

then picked it up, and afterwards haſtily re-entered the wood. As for me, riveted to my window, as if by enchantment, it was impoſſible for me to tear myſelf from it; I ſhould have remained there, I believe, till dinner-time, if, at the expiration of an hour, I had not diſtinctly heard the door of the cabinet open. Immediately I ſprang towards the partition..... Imagine, if it be poſſible, the exceſs of my aſtoniſhment, on ſeeing a piece of the wainſcoting come out, fall, and leave an opening, through which paſſed a hand, of an enchanting whiteneſs and beauty, holding an arrow!..... This hand threw the arrow into my room, and inſtantly diſappeared..... Almoſt at the ſame moment I heard the door of the cabinet ſhut again.....

Loſt in amazement, I picked up the arrow; round it was wrapped a ſlip of paper on which were written theſe words:

"To

"*To my true mark!*" .... I fell back in a chair, exclaiming: "Oh! whoever thou "art, thou haſt ſubdued me!" .... At that moment there was a knock at my door..... I haſtened to conceal the arrow, and then went to open it; the Chevalier, who came to communicate to me the plan of the little *fête* which he meant to give to Madame de S****, made his appearance. He related to me an infinite number of particulars, to which I liſtened with an extreme abſence of mind; among other things, he told me that he had, without Madame de S****'s knowledge, ſent to Paris for her nephew, a young child four or five years old, of whom ſhe was exceedingly fond; his mother, Madame de S****'s ſiſter, was at the waters of Plombières, and ſhe had leſt this child in the care of a governeſs. As we were chatting together, a ſervant came to tell us that the child was arrived. He was brought up into my room, where he re-

mained till noon, the hour fixed for preſenting the *bouquet* *. We dreſſed the child as a *Cupid*; we took him to a temple in the garden; there, we laid him down on a turf ſeat by the ſide of an altar of Hope, on which ſome perfumes were burning; the child was covered with a light veil, and exhorted to ſleep till our return. Borel, Madame de S****'s *valet-de-chambre*, who was in our confidence, came to tell us that his miſtreſs wanted us; and we went to her with an intention of conducting her immediately to the *Temple of Love*. Madame de S****, under different pretexts, made us wait three quarters of an hour before ſhe conſented to follow us into the garden. At length when we got there, the ſignal was given to the muſicians placed behind the temple; the Chevalier propoſed to us to go to that ſide whence the ſymphony proceeded; and we thus arrived at the gate of the temple.

* See *Tranſlator's Note* in page 261.

We

We thought to occaſion Madame de S**** a ſurpriſe; but we did not expect the enchanting ſight that ſtruck our eyes! The door flew open, and we ſaw the beautiful *incognita* in the character of *Friendſhip*, leaning on the altar of *Hope*, by the ſide of *Love* lightly veiled, and holding the drapery that covered him!.... She was clothed in a robe of ſilver gauze; and a crown of everlaſting flowers* formed her head-dreſs..... On perceiving us ſhe ſang the following words, which ſhe addreſſed to Madame de S****:

Approach, and here your ſight regale;
Let no miſtruſt your boſom move:
Approach, and gently lift the veil;
'Tis *Friendſhip* that preſents you *Love!*

Madame de S**** lifted the veil; *Love*, reclined on a bed of flowers, opened his arms to her, and preſented her with a *bouquet*, and *Friendſhip* threw herſelf on

* Gnaphalium. *Linn.*

her boſom!.... "O! my Camille!" exclaimed Madame de S****.—"*O! my "ſiſter!*"....anſwered divine *Friendſhip*, and her tears interrupted her ſpeech! Madame de S**** was unable to reſtrain hers!.... During this unexpected ſcene the Chevalier and I were petrified!.... My agitation was ſuch that I thought I was going to faint; I ſtaggered; a thick miſt covered my eyes; I leant againſt a pillar, and there I remained motionleſs for ſome time!..... At the expiration of a few minutes, Madame de S**** turning round to us: "It is ſaid," cried ſhe, "that "women are incapable of keeping a ſe-"cret; I hope," continued ſhe, "that "you will do us more juſtice. For two "years, a cloſe intimacy has ſubſiſted be-"tween my charming Camille and me; "and even the Chevalier has not known "this ſecret."... Here the Chevalier interrupted her to expreſs his ſurpriſe and admi-

admiration, and to aſk a thouſand queſtions at once.

Madame de S**** anſwered them only by laughing; but Camille, in a more ſerious tone, aſſured him that ſhe would ſatisfy his curioſity. I then approached trembling; and Madame de S**** ſat down between her lover and her friend; ſhe took *Love* upon her lap; there remained no more ſeats, and I ſat on the ground at the feet of Camille!.... There was a moment's ſilence; after which, Camille, beginning her ſtory, informed us that ſhe was the niece and ward of the rich, old Dercy, formerly a notary, retired to Senlis, and a real guardian in a play, in love, jealous, and wiſhing to marry this beautiful and charming girl of ſeventeen. She related to us that, for theſe two years, he had kept her in the ſtrangeſt captivity; but that ſhe had gained over her keepers; that Dercy, compelled by indiſpenſable buſineſs, to go and paſs a week in Paris, was

not to return till the day after the next, and that ſhe had, according to her wiſhes, been able to avail herſelf of the entire liberty afforded her by his abſence.

The intimacy between Camille and Madame de S**** explained to me many things; I recollected that Camille, in the ſecond ſtanza of her *romance*, ſaid that ſhe had often heard the name of the object that occupied her mind; I gueſſed that Madame de S**** had ſpoken to her of d'Olbreuſe's brother; that, perhaps, even ſhe had ſhewn her thoſe letters, ſo well written, communicated by the Chevalier, and that all theſe things had exalted the imagination of a young girl without any experience, and naturally romantic and diſpoſed to love. But what ſtill appeared to me abſolutely inexplicable, was, that Madame de S****, who certainly was the confidant of this ſentiment, ſhould give it her approbation. Madame de S**** was then three and twenty; ſhe has a gen-

tle

tle and feeling ſoul, an amiable and ſteady diſpoſition, and a diſcretion ſo much the more meritorious as ſhe is extremely volatile and giddy in every thing in which ſhe is perſonally concerned. Her underſtanding has more quickneſs than extent; ſhe has few principles; but a great many natural virtues. It is inconceivable that ſhe could have believed that the Chevalier's family would conſent to a marriage ſo unſuitable; ſhe could not be ignorant what power the prejudices of birth have over the mind of the old Marquis d'Olbreuſe; in ſhort, young Mademoiſelle Dercy had not, in her own right, any fortune, and no reliance was to be placed on that of her uncle, ſince he was determined to marry her himſelf. So the madneſs of this project is ſtill to me a thing really incomprehenſible.

We did not leave the Temple of Love till two o'clock; notwithſtanding an enthu-

ſiaſm too well founded, I had, however, made a ſalutary reflection, which ſtrengthened me in the deſign of taking my leave the next morning. I was indebted only to an error for Camille's ſentiments; this idea calmed my delirium, and I promiſed myſelf to undeceive her before the cloſe of the day. We ſat down to table, and I was placed next to Camille! This young girl, with the moſt noble manners, ſhewed no knowledge of the world; it was obvious that ſhe had lived only in ſolitude; ſhe was ignorant of every cuſtom, and even of an infinite number of the rules of propriety; yet, in her deportment, there was a certain air of ſuperiority by which it was impoſſible not to be ſtruck; ſhe might have been taken for a princeſs in diſguiſe..... As for her beauty, it is as regular, and as perfect as it is affecting. I have ſeen in my life only two faces, which it is impoſſible ever to forget, hers and Pauline's, but in a ſtyle abſolutely different. The charming

ing expreſſion of Pauline's face is candour and ſerenity; all Camille's features ſeem formed to paint the moſt energetic ſentiments. Does ſhe ſoften, her look is fond; does ſhe grieve, the moſt pathetic ſorrow is diſplayed on her brow. Pauline's face inceſſantly exhibits in ſucceſſion all the ſoft and delicate ſhades of ſenſibility; Camille's preſents only its great features. Pauline, by attractive graces, by a countenance full of ſweetneſs, compoſure, and purity, by a heavenly ſmile, anſwers the idea that we form of angels; Camille realizes the chimera of the goddeſſes of fable. The one ſoftly inſinuates herſelf to the bottom of the heart in order to occupy it delightfully, to reign there always; the other ſeizes on the imagination, which ſhe inflames and exalts. A man muſt love the former as he loves virtue, without paſſion, but with conſtancy; he cannot love the latter but with enthuſiaſm; the ſentiment that ſhe inſpires, by its very violence, cannot

not long ſubſiſt; but it abſorbs, it conſumes as long as it laſts. Her wit is like her beauty; it is dazzling, it is indefinite; it has ſomething ideal; it is ſo combined with her affections that I am at a loſs what name to give it; 'tis better than wit; it is ſomething more winning than ſenſibility; I could be tempted to ſay that it is genius, if this name could be applied to nothings, to a reply, to a ſally, to a ſong; there is ſuch an originality in her perſon and in her character, that it is as difficult to deſcribe her as it is to divine or anticipate her thoughts; a picture appears fantaſtical when it has no affinity to objects already known: Camille reſembles no perſon; no idea can be formed of her till one has had an opportunity of knowing her. She owes nothing to education; neither is ſhe the child of nature; ſhe is the brilliant and romantic work of her own imagination.....

Towards the concluſion of dinner, Madame de S**** begged Camille to ſing.

"I am

"I am going," ſaid ſhe, looking at me, "to ſing you the ſong that I love beſt!" And ſhe ſang the *arietta* which I had played on my flute:

"*Amour, amour! quelle eſt donc ta puiſſance!*"

Judge of the impreſſion that this tune muſt have produced on me!.... Camille remained with us the whole day without quitting us a moment, and my reaſon became completely bewildered!.... Yet I ſtill preſerved ſufficient probity to perſiſt in the intention of declaring to Camille that I went by a fictitious name, and that I was no longer free. For this purpoſe, it was neceſſary to converſe with her in private; the ſole idea of this interview made me ſhudder; and, nevertheleſs, a ſort of cruel curioſity, inſpired above all by ſelf-love, and a want of violent emotions, made me look forward, with a lively intereſt, to this ſcene ſo melancholy and

ſo

ſo embarraſſing!.....In ſhort, I was on the point of knowing the bottom of this extraordinary girl's heart; I was on the point of knowing whether I was indebted only to her prepoſſeſſion in favour of another, for the ſentiments which ſhe had ſhewn to me.

The Chevalier and Madame de S**** appeared that day more paſſionately fond of each other than uſual; this picture added but too much to the internal diſorder that I experienced!.....

After ſupper, the weather was delightful. A walk in the garden was propoſed; muſicians placed in the wood, played ſome charming muſic; we walked by the ſoft light of the brighteſt moon; the air was perfumed, and I gave my arm to Camille! .....We were both ſome yards before. At the corner of a walk, I looked round: no longer ſeeing the Chevalier and his female companion, my heart beat with violence!.....I trembled.....Camille

perceived

perceived it. "What's the matter with "you?" ſaid ſhe to me—"Beautiful Ca-"mille," anſwered I, "we are alone.... "I wiſh to avail myſelf of this moment, "in order to make to you ſome painful "confeſſions."...."*Painful* confeſſions!" repeated ſhe.—"Yes," rejoined I, "but "I owe them to you."—"Well," replied ſhe, "let us ſit down, I will attend to "you." In ſaying theſe words, ſhe entered a lattice-work arbour covered with honey-ſuckle; ſhe ſat down on a turf ſeat, and with a faultering voice: "Speak, "Henri;" ſaid ſhe, "ſpeak."—"O! "Camille," anſwered I, "what am I "going to tell you!..... what am I "going to entruſt to you!..... That "object ſo fortunate as to intereſt you for "a long time paſt, that Henri d'Elvas!" —"Well! proceed."—"I am not "he."—"You are not the brother of "the Chevalier d'Olbreuſe?"—"No; I "am not."—"Well, of what conſe-

"quence

"quence is that to me! You are *yourſelf!*" ..... At theſe words I fell at her feet, I ſeized one of her hands, and bathed it with tears. Till then ſhe had only dazzled, aſtoniſhed and charmed me; but this word had juſt penetrated to the bottom of my heart! ..... "Ah! Camille," exclaimed I, "incomparable creature, I muſt, "on account of this virtuous effort, juſtify your kindneſs ..... It is only by "renouncing every hope that I can ſhew "myſelf worthy of you"—"I divine "your ſecret," interrupted ſhe, "you "have neither birth nor fortune! ..... "Thanks to the God of love: at this "moment how ſweet it is to me to ſwear "to you, that I beſtow myſelf on you "..... Yes," continued ſhe with vehemence, "whoever you may be, Camille "is yours!"———In pronouncing theſe words, ſhe fell into my arms! ..... I was no longer myſelf; virtue, honour, every thing was forgotten .....

I took

I took an unfair advantage of her enthuſiaſm* !.....

How

* This bower-ſcene, and the thunder-ſtorm that follows, can ſcarcely fail to bring to the reader's mind the adventure between Dido and Æneas, when driven into a cave by the ſame ſort of tempeſtuous weather. Madame de Genlis, no doubt, had in view that paſſage of VIRGIL's *fourth book of the Æneid*; though, in *her* narrative, the ſtorm is not the cauſe of the meeting. She has told the ſtory very prettily; and, to do her juſtice, with no ſmall degree of modeſty: but this *laſt* ingenious and ſtudied expreſſion of the modern French noveliſt, in our humble opinion, falls infinitely ſhort of the natural and unaffected delicacy of the old Roman poet. Much as we admire DRYDEN, we have preferred PITT's verſion of this paſſage, for reaſons which muſt be obvious to the reader.—*Tranſlator's Note.*

" Meantime loud thunders rattle round the ſky,
" And hail and rain, in mingled tempeſt, fly;
" While floods on floods, in ſwelling, turbid tides,
" Roll roaring down the mountain's channell'd
" ſides.
" The young Aſcanius, and the hunting train,
" To cloſe retreats fled diverſe o'er the plain.
" To the ſame gloomy cave with ſpeed repair
" The Trojan hero and the royal fair.

" Earth

How ſhall I deſcribe the dreadful ſcene that followed this culpable diſtraction. Camille in tears fell at my feet. "I re-"proach you with nothing," ſaid ſhe to me; "I accuſe only my own imprudence "and weakneſs!.... Now I can be no "more than a ſuppliant.... O! you, "ſole arbiter of my deſtiny, if contempt "drives you from me, let pity bring you "back and detain you! What will become "of me if you forſake me! Having no "longer any right to your eſteem, I dare "not

---

"Earth ſhakes, and Juno gives the nuptial ſigns;
"With quiv'ring flames the glimm'ring grotto "ſhines:
"With light'nings all the conſcious ſkies are "ſpread;
"The nymphs run ſhrieking round the mountain's "head.
"From that ſad day, unhappy Dido, roſe
"Shame, death, and ruin, and a length of woes.
"Nor fame nor cenſure now the queen can move,
"No more ſhe labours to conceal her love.
"Her paſſion ſtands avow'd; and wedlock's name
"Adorns the crime, and ſanctifies the ſhame."

" not claim that of love; but I expect " every thing from your generoſity. My " exiſtence is in your hands; you can re- " ſtore to me a proſpect and happineſs, or " you can irrevocably abandon me to de- " ſpair and infamy!" ....

Every word of this ſpeech was like a dagger in my heart! .... Bewildered, motionleſs, with a ſtupid look I contemplated her at my feet, and there I ſuffered her to remain without having power to utter a ſingle word. Her ſobs ſtifled her: .. ſhe embraced my knees: " Speak; oh! ſpeak," reſumed ſhe, " give me life or give me death!" ...

The moon beamed on her face in which feeling, anxiety, and grief were painted with the moſt affecting energy..... Oh! how much her diſorder and her tears added to her beauty! .... Struck, penetrated by the moſt urgent remorſe, I mechanically made a few ſteps backwards; ſhe crawled on her knees, ſaying in a faint voice: " Ah! if you will fly from " me,

"me, take away my life!"—"Camille!" exclaimed I at laſt, "oh! 'tis I alone "who ought to abhor life; I can only "offer you the ſacrifice of mine!"—"What do you ſay?"—"I am a monſter, "and the moſt wretched of mankind: or-"dain my fate!"—"Can't you then "unite it with mine?"—"I am no "longer free!"——"Ah! barbarous "man!" ſaid ſhe, and, in pronouncing theſe words, the unfortunate girl fainted away!.... I uttered a lamentable cry, at the ſame time proſtrating myſelf be-ſide her. I had loſt my ſenſes; and if I had had my ſword, I ſhould certainly have attempted my life in this firſt moment of deſpair. I durſt not aſſiſt Camille, who lay ſenſeleſs. This victim of my frenzy was, by my re-morſe and by her misfortune, become ſo reſpectable in my eyes, that I ſhould have thought I was aggravating my crime, and committing a ſacrilege by taking her into my arms..... and conſidering neither her

reputation nor my own, or to ſpeak more correctly, finding, in the ſtate in which I was, a ſort of enjoyment in braving every thing, I made the air ring with the moſt piercing cries, in order to attract people to us! ....

In the mean time the ſky became all at once covered with clouds; a ſudden and violent wind announced a ſtorm; a heavy ſhower of rain, mixed with hail, immediately followed. The coolneſs of the air, and the dreadful roar of the thunder, revived Camille's ſenſes; I heard her ſigh, and ſuſpended my cries! ....

Finding herſelf in profound darkneſs, ſhe thought at firſt that I had abandoned her ..... "He's no longer here," ſaid ſhe, "and he has left me dying!" .... As ſhe ſaid theſe words, a vivid flaſh of lightning appearing to ſet on fire the whole garden, Camille perceived me on my knees be-ſide her; our looks met, and we both ſhuddered! ..... After a mo-

moment's ſilence: "What are you doing "there?" ſaid ſhe to me, "go away."— "I cannot."—"What can detain you?" —"Remorſe and deſpair."—"Don't "pity me, I ſhall not long ſuffer." Theſe words, pronounced in a terrible and ſolemn tone, made me tremble. "Camille," rejoined I, "deign to hear me. I would "give my life to redeem a moment's error "ſo fatal!.... I am guilty, I alone am "guilty!.... but I am become ſo with- "out ever having harboured the vile pro- "ject of ſeducing you!.... You give me "a glimpſe of ſiniſter intentions which "chill me with horror!.... If you do "not promiſe me to relinquiſh them, I "call heaven to witneſs that, at break of "day, I will return to Paris in order to "denounce myſelf as the author of the "death of the Count de ***, with "whom I fought a duel, and who is dying "of his wounds. The Count de *** "is a favourite of the king, who has ſworn

"to

"to make an example of the parties engag-
"ed in the firſt duel that ſhould be proved.
"The Count has the generoſity to conceal
"my name. If I declare myſelf I ſhall
"periſh on a ſcaffold, and this is the fate
"which I deſerve, and ſhall wiſh for, if
"you perſiſt in your horrid reſolution."

Camille remained a moment without anſwering; then ſhe ſaid in a ſobbing voice: "Of what conſequence is it to you whether "I live or die?"—"I repeat it to you, if "you make any attempt on your life, I "will periſh on a ſcaffold."—"Are you "happy?"—"I was before I knew you; "but I cannot become ſo again."—"What's your real name?"—"D'Erne-"ville."—"Did your wife marry you "from choice?"—"We have loved each "other from our infancy."—"Are you "a father?"—"Yes."—"You ought to "live."—"Then comfort this bleeding "heart.... promiſe me to abjure for ever "ſo frightful a project."—"I promiſe

" you I will, not for your own ſake, un-
" grateful and cruel man, but for the ſake
" of your wife and child."

This ſtrange dialogue, carried on by the glare of the lightning and the noiſe of dreadful peals of thunder, was interrupted by the arrival of ſeveral ſervants who were looking for us.... On hearing their voices, I conjured Camille to diſſemble her confuſion; I aſſured her that, in every moment of my life, ſhe might diſpoſe of me; ſhe interrupted me with the tone of contempt, ſaying to me: " Forget me, " this is all that I can ever deſire of you." I was obliged to conduct her back to the houſe. It was with a ſort of horror that I entered a drawing-room lighted up..... I ſhould have wiſhed to be able to hide myſelf in the boſom of the earth!..... Camille was pale; her hair was diſhevelled, and her eyes had a certain wild look that made me tremble. Although ſhe had not expreſſed the ſmalleſt ſign of fright, ſhe

was

was exceedingly afraid of thunder; and this fear, known to Madame de S ****, removed every ſuſpicion that might have ariſen from her appearance. I haſtened to my apartment. I did not go to bed; could I hope to enjoy a moment's repoſe? .... At the dawn of day I ſent for poſt-horſes, and ſet off before any one in the houſe was awake.

I learnt, on my arrival in Paris, that the Count de *** was ſo ill that it was not expected he could poſſibly get through the night. This news completely overwhelmed me ..... Left alone to my remorſe, I found myſelf without conſolation and without courage. "O! God!" exclaimed I, "what a revolution in my ex-"iſtence! .... Hell is in my heart, and "nothing changed in my fate! .... Ah! "we alone decide our deſtiny; events, in-"dependent of our will, cannot have on us "this frightful influence; a crime, that "we cannot repair, is the only misfortune

" without a remedy; the grave even is " then no longer a ſafe aſylum for the " guilty!..... Death, that laſt hope of " unfortunate innocence, offers, with re- " morſe, nothing but a horrible uncer- " tainty!....

" Juſt heaven! into what an abyſs have " I plunged myſelf!... Had I triumphed " over a puerile anger, and had ſuffi- " cient command over my reaſon to have " quitted Senlis a day ſooner, I ſhould " be neither a murderer nor a ſeducer; " the Count would live, and Camille would " not be diſhonoured!"....

I was giving myſelf up to theſe torment- ing reflections, when three letters were brought me; one from you, my affection- ate mother, and two from Pauline. The peruſal of theſe three letters, full of confi- dence and tenderneſs, filled the meaſure of my deſpair; I was no longer worthy of receiving ſuch marks of affection; it ſeemed to me that they were no longer addreſſed

addreſſed to me; far from making an impreſſion on me, they were to me no more than cruel reproaches. A mind, torn by remorſe, has no longer any power to enjoy ſo pure a happineſs!

I had retired to Paſſy, to a ſmall houſe where I had taken an apartment under a fictitious name. The Chevalier d'Olbreuſe came to ſee me the next day, and as the Count was ſtill in a dangerous ſituation, he urged me to ſet out for England. In order to rid myſelf of his importunities, I promiſed him I would, fully determined not to do ſo; life was a burden to me. Beſides, the Chevalier informed me that Camille was ſeriouſly ill, which was attributed to the fright that the ſtorm had occaſioned her. This news wrung my heart; and I ſhould have thought myſelf guilty of the greateſt cowardice had I quitted France at that moment.

I ſent the next day to Senlis ſolely to inquire after Camille. I durſt not ſend di-

rectly to her houſe, for fear of expoſing her, on account of her guardian; I contented myſelf with writing to the Chevalier, who anſwered me on this head, in ſuch a manner as ſtill to increaſe my inquietude. I then reſolved to return to Senlis to Madame de S****'s, which I did, after having paſſed three days at Paſſy, leaving the Count de *** exactly in the ſame ſituation.

Madame de S**** received me with ſurpriſe and pleaſure. I ſaw that ſhe ſtill thought me the brother of her lover, and that the Chevalier and Camille had certainly not let her into the ſecret. After the firſt compliments, I queſtioned her, with trembling, concerning her young friend, and ſhe told me that ſhe was better; but that, for four and twenty hours, apprehenſions had been entertained for her life .... I made a pretext for leaving the room; my tears would have betrayed me, had I remained there a moment longer.

I ſpent

I ſpent three days at Senlis. The evening before my departure, walking ſorrowfully towards the cloſe of the day in the little wood, I all at once diſcovered Camille, who, coming out of a walk which croſſed that I was in, found herſelf on a ſudden oppoſite to me .... She was walking languiſhingly, and her feeble and dejected air gave to her bewitching face the moſt affecting and intereſting expreſſion: my firſt movement on ſeeing her was to put one knee to the ground, and I remained motionleſs in this attitude. I had my eyes caſt down, for I ſhould not have been able to endure her look. .... Camille, on perceiving me, turned pale and ſtaggered; ſhe leant againſt a tree, without uttering a word .... "Oh! forgive me!" ſaid I to her in a low voice, "I knew you were "ill, and I could not reſiſt my anxiety; I "am come! .... But go to your friend's "Madame de S ****, you ſhall not ſee "me there, I will ſay that I loſt my way

" in taking a walk; I am going into the " foreſt, I ſhall remain there till mid- " night, and I will ſet off to-morrow at " the dawn of day." ....

I waited for an anſwer, and I received none.... I ventured to lift up my eyes; but I ſaw Camille only turned from me; ſhe was going back..... ſhe walked exceedingly ſlow, I followed her for a long time with my eyes, and, when I ceaſed to ſee her, a flood of tears overflowed my face. .... This mournful ſight augmented my gloomy melancholy; although I had ſeen Camille return home, I perſiſted in the intention of going into the foreſt of Senlis; and, without intending it, I there loſt myſelf ſo effectually that I was obliged to ſleep in the ſhed of a *garde-vente**. In this hut, formed of felled wood, I found a young

* Theſe are people who ſleep in the foreſts for the ſecurity of the felled wood, which is immediately under their care.

man.

man of a very handſome perſon, and of the moſt lively and moſt noiſy gaiety. He told me that I was between two and three miles from Senlis. I then begged him to ſhew me the way thither. "Ah! don't "you know," anſwered he, "that I muſt "not loſe ſight of the wood that's ſold." "But," continued he, "as you are not a "pretty girl, you may ſleep here; and "to-morrow morning Jean-Louis will "come to relieve me, and I will take you "to Senlis."

In the ſituation I was in, I preferred a *tête-à-tête* with this young man to making a third between the Chevalier and his miſtreſs, and I accepted this propoſal.

A ſmall lamp lighted the hut, which was clean and pretty well encloſed; two wooden ſtools, and a thick trunk of a tree, cut as a block, and ſerving as a table, compoſed all the furniture. On the block there was a bottle of wine, a glaſs, a baſket full of nuts, a piece of cheeſe placed on

ſome leaves, and ſome brown bread. The young man made me drink a glaſs of wine; then I aſked him why he had told me that he would admit me into his cabin, becauſe I was not *a pretty girl.* "Don't "believe, for all that," anſwered he, beginning to laugh again, "that I have an "averſion to pretty girls; quite the con-"trary..... But here's the matter: you "muſt know that, within theſe ſix weeks, "I am engaged to the prettieſt girl in "Senlis, Fanchette Dumont; but what "think ye but laſt Monday, much about "this time of night, I heard at my door "*knock, knock!* and I went and opened it; "and I ſaw a young laſs of fifteen, as freſh "as a noſegay, who was crying, and who "told me that ſhe had loſt her way in the "foreſt, and was vaſtly frightened; ſhe "begged me to take her in, and ſaid that ſhe "would remain in a corner of my hut till "day-light. It poured with rain; but, for "all that, I made my reflections; thinks I

"to myſelf, I can't ſhut the door againſt "this poor young girl; but to keep her "all night is running too great a riſk, the "devil is ſo miſchievous!..... I am en- "gaged to Fanchette Dumont; 'tis true "that we have not put any thing down in "black and white; that there's neither "banns nor writing; but, for all that, I've "promiſed; an honeſt man has only his "word.... Coſt what it will, I will ſhew "this girl the way back to Senlis. I "ought not to loſe ſight of the wood that's "cut and ſold; but there'll be nobody the "wiſer for it but God in heaven, and "there's no harm in the matter. No "ſooner ſaid, no ſooner done. I went to "Senlis, I left the little girl at the gates, "and, like an arrow out of a bow, I "came back to my hut. I was wet to the "ſkin; but I was as happy as a king, and "I made but one nap of it."

You may eaſily imagine the effect produced on me by this intereſting ſtory, of

which I have endeavoured to give you the very expreſſions. Oh! how much did I find myſelf inferior to this young man, without education, without any inſtruction; but whoſe probity was ſo true, and whoſe ſentiments were ſo honourable! He told me that the little girl, whom he had eſcorted back to Senlis, was a ſervant at Madame de S****'s, that the latter being informed of the circumſtance, had ſent for him, and, after having queſtioned him, ſhe had given him a louis.

Raimond (that is the name of this good young man) forced me to accept half of his ſupper; this frugal repaſt laſted upwards of an hour, for Raimond enlivened it by half a dozen ſongs conſiſting of very long ſtanzas; after this, he invited me to ſhare his bed; that is, to lie down beſide him on a large heap of dry leaves. I did not cloſe my eyes a ſingle moment, and the whole night long I envied the peaceful and ſound ſleep of my young companion,

panion, as much as I had envied his gaiety.

At break of day he conducted me back to Senlis. I had no money about me; but I took him up into my room, and there, to his no ſmall aſtoniſhment, I gave him twelve louis. I waited for Madame de S**** to riſe. Raimond had been ſeen in the houſe, and I was under the neceſſity of relating to her my adventure. After breakfaſt I haſtened to take my departure.

On my arrival in Paris I received great conſolation; I there learnt that the Count de *** was rather better, and, a week after, he was entirely out of danger. I then thought ſeriouſly of ſettling all my affairs, which I had totally neglected for three weeks; and I flattered myſelf that I ſhould be able to return to Erneville in leſs than two months.

One morning, at the moment when I was going out, a ſtrange ſervant delivered Le Maire a little box directed to me, and, without

without waiting for an anſwer, he immediately diſappeared. This box was brought to me, and in it I found twelve louis, and a note conceived in theſe terms:

"You were not worthy of offering a "mark of eſteem to the faithful and feel- "ing Raimond; and if he knew you, he "would have refuſed it from you with "contempt. Take back this ſum, and if "you are ſo unfortunate as to be ſenſible "of the value of honeſty, and to admire "virtue, reflect that you have forfeited "the noble right of honouring it by your "approbation."

There was on earth but one perſon that could write me ſuch a note. I recognized with confuſion the unfortunate Camille! In fact, it was ſhe. I have ſince been informed that, having learned from Madame de S**** both Raimond's ſtory and what I had done for him, ſhe had haſtened the marriage of this young man, at the ſame time loading him with favours, and

that

that ſhe had afterwards obtained for him an excellent ſituation in the country.

I abſolutely ceaſed to return to Senlis. I gave myſelf up entirely to my affairs for near three months; hearing nothing more of Camille, this cruel recollection was beginning to wear away, when I received by the poſt the following letter:

"Yes, I would have you know that no-
"thing is wanting to the horror of my
"ſituation, and that I bear within me the
"unhappy fruit of your crime and of my
"ſhame!.... What will become of me?
"....Ah! of what conſequence is that?
"But what will become of my unfortunate
"child?.... What effect has on me the
"ſupreme power of ſo dear an intereſt? I
"ſtoop to have recourſe to you!.... It
"is ſaid that you are going to leave Paris:
"can you not delay your departure for a
"few months?.... Will you abandon this
"innocent being which I have no means
"to conceal and to bring up?.. Oh! for it,

"I could

" I could again be a ſuppliant! .... Be a
" father, and you will expiate all, and I
" will ceaſe to curſe you: what do I ſay,
" you will then have claims on my re-
" ſpect and gratitude! I ſhall no longer ſee
" any thing but a benefactor in the father
" of my child. But be ſo! Swear to me
" to love it, to take care of it, to have
" always an eye over it, and to attend to its
" education." ....

" Do not come to Senlis.... I am told
" that you have a ſervant on whom you
" can perfectly rely: ſend me your anſwer
" by him; let him come to Senlis to Fan-
" chette Dumont's mother's, on the ſquare
" next the inn; let him deliver your let-
" ter to this woman, and wait for the an-
" ſwer at her houſe; I will go thither.
" Adieu; if you are not the moſt barba-
" rous of men, you will juſtify this ſtep
" and my hope!"

This heart-rending letter re-opened all the wounds of my heart, and added freſh remorſe

remorſe to that which already overwhelmed me .... I anſwered it immediately in theſe terms:

" It is on my knees that I write to you!
" Ah! why do you talk to me of *expiating!*
" A whole life of ſorrow and remorſe
" could not do it!.... That precious
" truſt! ah! how dear will it be to me!
" .... I ſwear by all that is moſt ſacred,
" to conſecrate to it the moſt tender and
" moſt aſſiduous attention!.... I going
" to leave Paris!.... Great God! I have
" only one piece of buſineſs more, and to
" that I devote myſelf without reſerve!

" You wiſh me not to appear at Sen-
" lis, and I obey you; but I am going to
" take up my abode in one of the cottages
" which are at the entrance of the foreſt;
" I ſhall there be diſguiſed, and like a
" poor traveller who is compelled to halt
" through fatigue. There I can receive
" your orders, and execute them without
" delay.—We muſt neceſſarily make ſure of

" two

" two or three inferior perſons; with mo-
" ney, with penſions, nothing is more eaſy.
" I take this trouble on myſelf, as well as
" all the reſt . . . . . A plan muſt be form-
" ed . . . . have the goodneſs to leave this
" matter to me.

" I can rely on the man whom I ſend
" you. I ſet out with him, and I ſhall not
" quit him till we get within three quar-
" ters of a mile of Senlis.

" Oh! why can I not, at the price of all
" my blood, repair my crime, and redeem
" your ſorrows?"—

I accordingly ſet out with Le Maire that very day, and I did every thing that I had announced. At the ſtage on this ſide of Senlis, I left my carriage; I ſent Le Maire on horſeback to Senlis, and I continued my route alone and on foot. I went and fixed myſelf in a miſerable cottage which was inhabited only by an old woman and her maid. Le Maire returned in the evening to give me an account

count of his commiſſion. He had ſeen Camille at Fanchette's mother's; but he brought no letter. Camille, after having read mine, had merely deſired him to tell me that ſhe would reflect on what I wrote her, and that ſhe begged me to ſend Le Maire back to her in ſix days. At the expiration of the time, I again ſent Le Maire with a letter, in which I propoſed a plan of conduct minutely detailed. I undertook every thing that might be troubleſome, and I inſiſted on the neceſſity of delivering the child over to me at the moment of its birth. I made, in this reſpect, every promiſe which could diſpel the apprehenſions of maternal affection, and which my heart dictated. Camille, without anſwering me in writing, ſent me word that my letter deſerved profound meditation, and that ſhe again requeſted of me a week to make up her mind on the ſubject.

I was in want of every thing in my cottage, and even of food, not daring to receive

ceive there Le Maire, whom I ſaw only in the foreſt. I was obliged to content myſelf with the table of my old hoſteſs, which was more than frugal. I had for my bed nothing but chopped ſtraw, and I ſlept in a ſort of ſhed equally damp and dark. But I bore with pleaſure theſe inconveniences and the extreme tireſomeneſs of my retreat; I loved to ſuffer for Camille; it was a ſort of expiation; yet my heart was broken, on reflecting that this event would delay my departure for ſix or ſeven months!..... To think of you, of Pauline, and of my ſon, was to me no longer any thing but a torment.

The week being elapſed, I received from Camille a note containing theſe words:

"I have not yet decided; but there is "no hurry. Return to Paris. When the "fatal moment approaches, I will let you "know the plan on which I may have "reſolved."

I ſet

I ſet out for Paris, and, three weeks after, I received a viſit from the Chevalier d'Olbreuſe whom I had not ſeen for near four months. His aſtoniſhed look ſtruck me; I queſtioned him with uneaſineſs, and he informed me that at length he knew my fatal ſecret. Camille had confeſſed the whole to Madame de S****, whoſe lively ſorrow occaſioned the gloomy melancholy of the Chevalier. I was forbid to go to Senlis; but every week I ſent thither Le Maire, who brought me back tidings of Camille.

Things remained in this ſituation till the month of November. Madame de S**** then went and took up her reſidence at Fontenay-aux-Roſes. The Chevalier told me that Madame de S**** having made an acquaintance with Camille's guardian, ſhe had gained his confidence by perſuading him that ſhe anxiouſly wiſhed that Camille ſhould marry him, and that ſhe had promiſed to engage her to do ſo, if he

he would entruſt her to her care for a few months; that, in conſequence, Madame de S**** was going to take Camille to Fontenay-aux-Roſes, and would keep her there till the ſpring.

Thus all the plan that I had deviſed was uſeleſs, Madame de S**** taking every thing on herſelf. But I wrote to Camille to conjure her to keep the promiſe that ſhe had made me to give me the child..... The Chevalier came on her part to renew to me this promiſe.

It was agreed that I ſhould go and take up my abode at Fontenay towards the latter end of January, in a houſe which I ſhould hire; that at the period of the *lying-in* I ſhould be apprized, that I ſhould repair to Madame de S****'s, in order to ſee the child at the moment of its birth, and that it ſhould be delivered to me at the end of nine days. I ſecured a nurſe, who never heard either of Camille's name or of mine.

On

On the 25th of January I went to Fontenay under a fictitious name. I took with me no one but Le Maire.

I dreaded exceedingly to ſee Madame de S****. I could very willingly have diſpenſed with going to her houſe; but the Chevalier, who came to ſee me every day, carried me thither. You may well ſuppoſe that I did not there meet Camille, who, being always apprized of my viſits, remained the whole time in her room.

It was not without the moſt lively emotion that I found myſelf again in the houſe which ſhe inhabited..... Madame de S**** mentioned nothing to me on the ſubject; but ſhe received me with a coolneſs that ſufficiently manifeſted to me her juſt reſentment. However, affected, perhaps, at my profound melancholy, ſhe behaved better to me towards the end of my viſit, and invited me to come again. I did not make an improper uſe of this permiſſion: I returned thither but twice.

I ſpent

I ſpent the whole day in drawing or reading; I ſaw the Chevalier every morning when he was not in Paris, and my time did not hang heavy on my hands, though I was not free from uneaſineſs. I experienced ſome cruel alarms in the expectation of the event that might coſt Camille her life! On the other hand, the prolongation of my ſtay threw me into a dreadful embarraſſment. How much one fault leads to others! I no longer wrote to the perſons the moſt worthy of my confidence but to deceive them; the letters which I addreſſed to you as well as to Pauline were no longer any thing but a tiſſue of falſehoods!..... In ſhort, this fatal error had made me neglect the moſt important buſineſs, and occaſioned the loſs of a law-ſuit which I ſhould certainly have gained, had I followed it up with the neceſſary zeal.

On the 18th of February, at eleven o'clock at night, the Chevalier came for me. Confuſed, agitated in an expreſſible manner,

manner, I went out on foot with him. He made me enter Madame de S***'s houſe by a private door..... We aſcended a little ſtair-caſe, and, after having croſſed a very dark gallery, the Chevalier opened a door, and we found ourſelves in a cabinet adjoining the chamber of Camille. "Let us wait the event here," ſaid the Chevalier to me; "I know that "every thing is going as well as poſſible; "be not uneaſy." I threw myſelf into a chair; I could neither ſtand nor ſpeak. The cabinet was lighted only by a lantern enveloped by a gauze, and ſuſpended to a very loftly cieling; this feeble light, which exactly reſembled moon-ſhine, recalled ſtrongly to my mind a recollection ever too ready to occur to my memory.....

The Chevalier, who was very penſive, was ſeated on a ſopha, and kept a profound ſilence.... We heard, from time to time, the hollow groans and ſmothered

cries of Camille. I trembled, I burſt into tears!....

At the expiration of an hour and a half, the door of the room was opened, and again ſhut, and Madame de S**** appeared, holding the child in her arms! ....I ſprang towards her....."'Tis a "boy," ſaid ſhe to me; "his mother "(who is as well as can be wiſhed) re- "queſts your bleſſing for him; as ſhe ſets "a great value on it, at the moment of "his birth, ſhe dictated to me the ex- "preſſions, which I am now going to re- "late to you, begging you to repeat them "literally."..... While Madame de S**** was ſpeaking, I had my face cloſe to that of my child, whom I bathed with tears. He did not cry at all; and although the darkneſs of the cabinet prevented me from ſeeing him diſtinctly, he appeared to me charming. At that inſtant the ſweet ſentiment of nature ſupplying in my mind

the

the place of happineſs and virtue, made me forget my crime and my remorſe! ...

Madame de S**** preſſing me to give the benediction preſcribed, I repeated it word for word, with a ſobbing voice, in the following form:

"I bleſs thee, my child; may heaven "give thee a feeling ſoul, the love of "virtue, and a long life exempt from "great paſſions!"

When I had pronounced theſe laſt words, Madame de S**** haſtening to quit me, abruptly left the room, carrying away the child, and ſaying to me: "Come "again in nine days, and I will deliver "you your child." On this, Madame de S**** re-entered Camille's chamber. I obſerved to the Chevalier that the child would want to have ſome milk before nine days. I propoſed to ſend the nurſe, which he refuſed, ſaying that he did not wiſh the nurſe to enter Madame de S****'s

houſe; that with reſpect to the child, a very able man-midwife undertook to manage matters during thoſe nine days.

The Chevalier accompanied me home. Through him I had every day an account of Camille. On the ninth day I went, at nine o'clock in the evening, to receive the child, who was immediately delivered to me. I wrapped him in my cloak; a hired coach waited for me at the door, and I got into it with my valuable burden. The nurſe was at my houſe, where I kept her for ſome days. I then took her, with the child, to Bagnolet; and it was ſettled that as ſoon as the boy was weaned I ſhould be apprized, and that I myſelf ſhould go for him, and take him into Burgundy.

Towards the end of my ſtay at Fontenay, Le Maire one morning aſked me leave to make an excurſion to Paris, promiſing to return in the evening. He did not come back; I waited for him for two

days without making any inquiry; at laſt I commiſſioned the Chevalier to inform himſelf of what was become of him. The Chevalier aſſured me that he had made every poſſibly ſearch, and had even applied to the police; but that he had not been able to diſcover the leaſt trace of him. Nothing detaining me longer in Paris, I quitted it with the more eagerneſs as, for a long time paſt I had received no letters from Pauline. I arrived at Erneville on the 9th of March. You know the vexations that awaited me there.....

The Chevalier married Madame de S**** in the month of June following. He then took the title of Count d'Olbreuſe. From time to time he gave me an account of my child, whom I went to take away, when he was able to diſpenſe with the breaſt. This child is at *Decizes*, boarding with a woman who is indebted to me for

what little ſhe has, and on whoſe diſcretion I can rely. She travelled with me to Paris, in order to take care of my ſon during the journey. I frequently go to ſee her; the child, whoſe chriſtian name is *Stephen*, is handſome and in good health.

As for Camille, it ſhocks me, I own, to acquaint you with the reſt of her hiſtory! ..... Oh! what inconceivable beings are women! This girl ſo proud, ſo alive to feeling, ſo romantic, is become a courteſan. ..... Nothing in the world has occaſioned me more aſtoniſhment..... Her ſoul was ſo great! ſhe appeared ſo well formed for virtue!.... But her imagination muſt have bewildered her!.... Beſides, ever in extremes, ſhe could not ſtop half-way in the road of ruin!.... Ah! but for me, ſhe would, no doubt, have been one of the models of her ſex! Thus, even her debaſement is to me a freſh ſubject of remorſe. As I muſt needs meet every where with the

the Duke de Roſmond, he is the very man who is the lover of Camille! ....

Now, my dear mother, you know all. Your maternal heart can alone excuſe errors ſo flagrant; I have not concealed any thing from you; I could offer you in expiation nothing but ſincerity, and confidence without reſerve.

Favour me with an early anſwer. I know that, with you, forgiveneſs always follows confeſſion; but I want to receive that forgiveneſs ſo much wiſhed for. Alas! I feel that you cannot *abſolve* me; yet when I have received the proofs of your ſweet indulgence, without being leſs penitent, I ſhall think myſelf leſs guilty.

LETTER XLVI.

The COUNTESS's *Anſwer to the* MARQUIS D'ERNEVILLE.

Dijon, Auguſt 18.

OH! WHAT impreſſion has this ſingular ſtory made on me!..... Yes, dear Albert, you are very culpable; but, indeed, what ſeduction ſurrounded you! Ah! no doubt, you ſhould have fled! Who, in the age of the paſſions can depend on a day's more power and command over himſelf?..... That *ſylphid*, that aſtoniſhing Camille, who could have reſiſted her? Even to the *ſtorm-ſcene* ſhe was Armida; ſhe was a fairy; but after her frailty, ſhe appears to me ſublime; what grief, what energy, what pride!.....

Yet,

Yet, on reflecting on this affair, it is ſhe who appears to me moſt inexcuſable. Notwithſtanding her imprudence and her fault, ſhe would be truly intereſting, if, inſtead of being the moneyleſs niece of a notary, ſhe had been an advantageous match for the brother of the Chevalier d'Olbreuſe; becauſe then ſhe would have acted with the certainty of marrying him to whom ſhe made ſo many advances: for it is to be ſuppoſed that by the letters of Henri d'Elvas, which were communicated to her, ſhe had aſcertained that this young man's heart was diſengaged. But how, with ſo much underſtanding, could ſhe believe that the Marquis d'Olbreuſe would conſent to ſuch an alliance? She wiſhed then only to ſeduce this young man! and may it not be ſuſpected that there was, in this intention, as much ambition and vanity as love and greatneſs of mind. Her female friend, who favoured this mad intrigue, is a character ſo abſurd

that one ought to take good care not to put it into a novel, for it would ſeem beyond the ſphere of probability.

Notwithſtanding my ſeverity towards Camille, I own to you, dear Albert, that I am inconſolable at her having fallen into ſo ſtrange a debaſement. She has then *acted* all the ſentiments which ſhe diſplayed on that fatal night, in that honey-ſuckle bower! She is then nothing more than a conſummate actreſs! But, at ſeventeen, can a girl diſſemble thus? And at any age whatever, can we divine the language of the moſt profound ſenſibility? No; that phenomenon would be ſtill more incomprehenſible than all the reſt! No; ſhe who, at the ſequel of that original and laconic interrogatory, ſaid to you: "*You* "*ought to live!*" ſhe who pronounced that energetic and affecting phraſe; ſhe who, in ſuch a ſituation, melted at the idea of your wife and child, that unfortunate girl had a ſoul caſt in no common mould! The mind

mind then can entirely degrade itſelf. I can conceive this, when it is has been corrupted from infancy; but is it a thing poſſible when arrived at the age in which all the faculties are developed? We know from experience all the pure and delicate emotions produced by ſenſibility. When, in ſhort, we have enjoyed all its virtues, I know that then we may commit enormous faults; we recover from them with luſtre, and we never fall into an habitual ſtate of debaſement; we may be inconſiſtent on ſome occaſions; but we cannot change our nature. If a great ſoul could become abject, I ſhould be almoſt tempted to believe that it could annihilate itſelf!.... How then ſhall we account to ourſelves for this extraordinary being, this inconceivable Camille! She puzzles my philoſophy!

Let us talk of *Stephen*, I will bring him up. Living only in the exterior apartments of a convent, it is very eaſy

for me to have him with me. My fondneſs for children is ſo well known that no one will be aſtoniſhed to ſee me take this boy. In the ſpace of fifteen years I have been ſeen to bring up three others, who were not related to me; ſo it will be the moſt natural thing in the world. By this means you will be able to ſee him often, openly and without any myſtery, and he will receive a good education.

You know that I meditate marriages long beforehand; do you know that I have already an idea of marrying my Stephen one day to that charming little Léocadie? Why not, if I ſucceed in making of Stephen a ſecond Albert? .... Oh! how I long to ſee this child! Promiſe to let me have him in a year at lateſt.

Adieu, my ſon; endeavour ſoon to make a little excurſion to Dijon; I have a thouſand queſtions to aſk you; and to write to you unknown to Pauline is to me a thing the moſt irkſome and the moſt unpleaſant.

unpleaſant. When we have a real affection, it ſeems that to conceal any thing from the object we love is to deceive and betray. We muſt abſolutely diſſemble Stephen's birth, and even make a tale on this ſubject; but at leaſt let us, as much as poſſible, avoid all uſeleſs myſtery.

LETTER XLVII.

From the MARCHIONESS D'ERNEVILLE *to the* BARONESS DE VORDAC.

Auguſt 29.

I HAVE taken back Jacinthe, my dear friend, and this is the manner in which it happened: Jacinthe came near Erneville to her aunt's, who lives at the *port du Fourneau*. She watched for Léocadie, in order to meet her walking one day, when ſhe

ſhe was neither with me nor with Mademoiſelle du Rocher. In ſhort, yeſterday ſhe found Léocadie with Goton in our large corn-fields, which are for Léocadie immenſe foreſts. This dear little girl was gathering blue-bottles. Jacinthe came up to her crying. Léocadie, notwithſtanding eighteen months' abſence, knew her inſtantly, and ran and threw herſelf into her arms, at the ſame time burſting into tears.

Then Jacinthe ſat down on the ridge of a furrow, took the child on her lap, and made her promiſe that ſhe would aſk me for her pardon. Accordingly Léocadie, on returning from her walk, called out to me as ſoon as ſhe perceived me: "*Pardon, "pardon, mamma, for poor Jacinthe!*" Maurice, who was with her, joined her, ſaying too: "*Yes, yes; pardon for poor "Jacinthe!*" I had great difficulty in obtaining an explanation, the two children not attending to me, and conſtantly repeating,

peating, as loud as they could bawl: "*Par-*
"*don for poor Jacinthe!*" At length, when every thing was cleared up, I anſwered, that Albert alone, our common maſter, could alone grant this pardon.

You may well ſuppoſe that Albert was warmly ſolicited; I owned to him that, being myſelf ſo fully juſtified, I would with pleaſure take back this girl, who is a very agreeable ſervant, and is ſo attentive to children. It was eight o'clock in the evening; the children were going to ſupper: Albert turning round to them: "My children," ſaid he, "which do you "prefer, to ſup immediately and to wait "till to-morrow to go for Jacinthe, or "not to ſup for this hour, and to ſet out di-"rectly for the *port du Fourneau?*"—"Oh! "to ſet off directly!" cried the children all at once. "Very well," ſaid he, "go, "and bring us back Jacinthe." The vindictive Mademoiſelle du Rocher, who was there, obſerved, that the dew was falling,

ing, and might be hurtful to Léocadie. Albert anſwered, that people ſhould not be afraid of dew when the queſtion was to do a good action. I wrapped up my Léocadie in a cloak; I put her on a cap; ſhe danced with joy and impatience, and conſidered this little addition of dreſs very uſeleſs and tedious. At laſt ſhe eſcaped from my hands; ſhe took hold of Maurice's arm, and ran out, followed by Goton and two ſervants, to whom I gave orders to carry her part of the way, which is pretty long.

At the expiration of an hour, they returned in triumph with Jacinthe. I am not aſhamed to tell you that I mingled my tears with thoſe of this poor girl, who is ſo penitent and ſo happy. Oh! how ſweet it is to forgive!

Beſides this, my dear friend, there is nothing new at Erneville, except that Léocadie has taken poſſeſſion of my old oak. She maintains that it belongs *to her*, and,

and, ſince this uſurpation, it is called *Léocadie's tree.* I love it but the better on this account. Adieu, my friend, till Thurſday.

LETTER XLVIII.

From MONSIEUR DU RESNEL, *to the* VISCOUNT DE ST. MÉRAN.

September 2.

I MUST, my dear Viſcount, confide to you ſome troubles which perplex me exceedingly. The Marquis d'Erneville wiſhed to know the motive that had determined Madame du Reſnel to deliver Léocadie into the hands of Pauline; he alſo wiſhed to know how ſhe managed to ſeduce Le Maire, and what was become of this man. I therefore wrote to Madame du Reſnel

Reſnel to aſk her all theſe queſtions. She for a long time eluded giving me any anſwer; at length, being warmly preſſed on this ſubject, ſhe wrote me a long letter ſo full of abſurdities and groſs contradictions, that I could not prevail on myſelf to ſhew it to my friends. I told them that Madame du Reſnel was in a conſumptive ſtate, which, growing worſe every day, did not permit her to write. In fact, I know that ſhe is really dying!....

Good God! my friend, if this greedy and unprincipled woman had made a falſe declaration!.... If, on the brink of the grave, ſhe ſhould retract!

How theſe thouſand louis weigh on my conſcience!.... Ah! even with the moſt laudable intention, even to ſerve friendſhip, we ought never to allow ourſelves to commit an action againſt integrity. Such an action, whatever may be the motive, is always blameable, imprudent, and dangerous. I am very much agitated; I have

ſome

ſome fatal ſurmiſes. Beſides, I think that the Marquis has reſumed ſome degree of miſtruſt; he appears grown very cool towards me. Add to all this, that Madame du Reſnel is ſurrounded by people who deteſt me, becauſe they are the enemies of Pauline. My dear Viſcount, I am not fortunate in my attachments! .... Your friendſhip is my ſole conſolation; 'tis a great one, no doubt! Oh! how neceſſary is it to me at this moment!

LETTER XLIX.

From the COUNTESS DE BEL * * *, *Canoneſs of Alix, to the* CHEVALIER DE CELTAS.

Alix, September 11.

IT is an age ſince I have heard from you, my amiable couſin: it is very wicked in you to make a ſport of intereſting people's thoughts, of turning their brains, and then to forget all your promiſes! .... Alix, which, for *five weeks*, appeared to me an enchanting abode, is no longer to me any thing but what it is in reality, a gloomy ſolitude.

It depends alone on you to reſtore to it the illuſion that embelliſhed it: come back and inhabit it! .... We expected you on the

the 25*th of Auguſt*; you had given me your word of honour..... is this acting *like a loyal Chevalier?*.... and how would you have me endure both your indifference and your forgetfulneſs.

My brother brought us lately Madame de ****, who paſſed ſeveral days in our neighbourhood; we talked of you, and he ſaid that you had been in love *with two ſiſters-in-law*; but that the latter had fixed you. I ſaw *the wonderful Marchioneſs* at Autun three or four years ago; ſhe by no means pleaſed me, although ſhe has ſome beauty; but I neither was ſatisfied with her behaviour nor with her converſation. I am not acquainted with Madame d'Orgeval; but I have aſked a great many queſtions concerning her, and am told that ſhe neither is pretty nor amiable, and that her only merit is being a great *coquette*. Here then is what you want! I will not dwell on this idea; it is enough to corrupt one.....For ſome time paſt, I have received

ceived two *declarations*, the one from the Baron de ****, the other from Monſieur de ***. Theſe two lovers are odious to me; but I give them the greateſt hopes; it is you who ought to thank me for this, becauſe it is only by acting in this manner that a woman can pleaſe you. Can I tell how far I may be led by the wiſh of ſupporting a character that captivates you!.... Let us ſpeak more ſeriouſly. I am much afflicted at the ſituation of poor Madame du Reſnel; ſhe is dying, and ſhe is ſenſible of it. All the *prejudices* of her youth return in a crowd to torment her. Conceive that ſhe will no longer ſee my brother. Tell me then, what I muſt do to tranquillize this enfeebled mind, and allay her empty terrors?

Adieu, moſt fickle, but moſt amiable of Chevaliers. The Lady Abbeſs and all our ladies invite you, expect you, and wiſh for you; and I.....ungrateful man! I ſcarcely dare *hope* ſtill; but I cannot change.

LETTER L.

The CHEVALIER'S *Anſwer.*

Autun, September 13.

I! FORGET *Alix!* ..... You do not believe it, my charming couſin. Not to write to you with exactneſs cannot be a fault; it can be no more than a misfortune.

For ſome time paſt I am overwhelmed with buſineſs; I have on my hands not only my own affairs, but alſo thoſe of my friends. Many perſons have a confidence in me, and entruſt me with their concerns: beſides, company takes from me, frequently in ſpite of myſelf, all my leiſure hours.

No, my amiable friend, I have not been in love with two *ſiſters-in-law*. As for the eldeſt, I am of your opinion: ſhe never

never pleaſed me; I admire not even her perſon, of which ſo much is thought; I, like another, have had with her my period of *favour*; I might have availed myſelf of it, if I had pleaſed; however, I had the bad taſte not to trouble myſelf at all about the matter; her knowledge and genius appear to me nothing but froth; beſides, ſhe is deceitful and capricious: all this is my averſion.

As for Madame d'Orgeval, it is quite another thing; I aſſure you that a very unfaithful portrait of her has been exhibited to you; I am certain that, if you knew her, ſhe would pleaſe you infinitely. You are both made to ſuit and love each other; and this is a connexion that I wiſh to form. Her huſband is my friend, ſo I have never had an idea of being in love with her. I have his entire confidence, and I think myſelf honoured by it. She is amiable, engaging, and witty. I will ſhew you ſome paſſages of her letters; you will be

delighted

delighted with them: ſhe writes better than Madame de Sevigné, and almoſt as well as you; ſhe is of a ſteady temper; in ſhort, ſhe is a true friend on whom I can rely.

I have (on your account) reflected on what you tell me of Madame du Reſnel. It is well known that you are her intimate friend, and that ſhe ſees no one but you. Be perſuaded that if ſhe dies, without having fulfilled all the exterior duties of religion, it is you alone who will be blamed, and you will have againſt you the formidable claſs of devotees, and all the ſcum of the prieſthood, which may, eſpecially in your profeſſion, have a powerful influence on the tranquillity of your whole life.

Philoſophy is of very pleaſant uſe in our chimney-corner and in our *boudoir* *; let

* A ſmall private apartment, peculiar to houſes fitted up in the French taſte, which is decked out

let us live without prejudices; but, in public, let us know how to reſpect them, and let us ſubmit *to forms*. So then I requeſt, and even inſiſt, as your moſt devoted friend, that you will look out for a confeſſor, and conduct him to your female friend.

I *forbid* you to think of your converſion for twenty years to come; but I exhort you to employ yourſelf, without delay, about that of Madame du Reſnel. This alone will do you infinite honour, and, independently of the year of liberty *, will enſure you all the leaves of abſence that we can deſire for the little private excurſions to Autun. You ſee that, in this, I ſtudy my own intereſt; and I own it can-

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with all the refinement of Aſiatic luxury, and generally conſecrated to voluptuouſneſs. *Tranſlator.*

* Out of three years, canoneſſes were obliged to paſs two in their chapters, unleſs they had particular leave of abſence. They might paſs the third year with their family, or in public ſociety.

didly;

didly; I do not forget myſelf, in giving you this advice; but would you be unconcerned in what intereſts me ſo warmly?

I make no reply to the accuſation of fickleneſs: this can be nothing but a pleaſantry. Who knows better than yourſelf how invariably I am *fixed?*

" On peut, en vous voyant, devenir infidèle;
" Mais c'eſt pour la dernière fois."*

LETTER LI.

The COUNTESS DE BEL***'s *Anſwer.*

Alix, September 15.

WHAT pleaſure your anſwer has given me, my dear couſin! In it I have diſcovered the ſentiments which I ſhare, and that perfect rationality for which you are

* On ſeeing you, a man may become faithleſs;
But it will be for the laſt time. *Chaulieu.*

diſtinguiſhed. You underſtand equally how to *lead aſtray* and how to guide. I immediately followed your advice: the *poor woman* experiences cruel anxieties. She is in terrible fear of hell; but ſhe does not think herſelf in urgent danger, and ſhe wiſhes to defer matters. Although ſhe has not poſitively owned it to me, I ſee clearly, at preſent, that all your conjectures relative to the little *female baſtard* were juſt.

Madame du Reſnel is afraid that a *confeſſor* will require the avowal and recantation of a falſehood which, undoubtedly, is worth no ſmall ſum to her..... Nothing is more clear; what muſt I do then? .... In order to perſuade her to *the grand queſtion*, I muſt neceſſarily declare to her that ſhe has no reſource; I have not the courage to do this. I feel, however, the force of all your reaſons. If ſhe dies like a philoſopher, what *a ſcandal!* and what clamours againſt me..... On the other hand,

hand, if I perſuade her, and if by chance ſhe ſhould recover, ſhe will, perhaps, no longer have any thing to live on, after her *recantation*; ſhe will be deprived of the reward that ſhe receives for the falſehood which ſhe maintains. Reflect on all this: point out to me then what I muſt do—time preſſes. Her phyſician has told me that ſhe has not a fortnight to live. Adieu, my amiable Chevalier; anſwer me immediately; we have not a moment to loſe.

LETTER LII.

The CHEVALIER'S *Anſwer.*

Autun, September 17.

THERE is no alternative, my dear couſin; you muſt abſolutely open Madame du Reſnel's eyes reſpecting her ſituation, and

perſuade her to do quickly what is proper. Your intereſt, and I will ſay more, probity makes it for you an indiſpenſable obligation. Truth muſt triumph and be diſcovered; we muſt unmaſk impoſture; we cannot do a better action. Exert yourſelf then with the activity that I expect from a character like yours. This is not all.—You are reſponſible for every ſtep that is taken; there muſt be nothing equivocal; ſo do not forget to call in *four witneſſes* and a notary. All this will cover you with glory, by ſhewing that you have an excellent head, and as much principle as underſtanding and attractions. I will not conceal from you that many people ſuſpect you of abetting the ſhameful conſpiracy of du Reſnel; they have even ventured to tell me that you had had the meanneſs to receive an *annuity* from this hypocritical fellow, in order to prevail on your friend to maintain this impoſture to her laſt breath! You muſt clear

yourſelf

yourſelf of this infamy; ſo no more weakneſs: heſitate no longer, and terminate this important affair immediately. When honour and probity ſpeak, no other conſideration ſhould impede us.

If Madame du Reſnel recovers, I engage to make her an allowance ſufficient to enſure her a decent livelihood. But let this remain for ever between you and me. Far from loving to divulge my actions of this kind, I cannot enjoy them, but when they are entirely unknown. Let us leave the empty boaſters to publiſh by ſound of trumpet their hypocritical beneficence; but, for our part, let us depoſit the avowal of it only in the boſom of love and friendſhip!

Adieu, my lovely friend; give me a detailed account of every thing that you may do on this occaſion.

Beſides the preſence of witneſſes, the recantation muſt be addreſſed directly to the Marquis d'Erneville. It is he who is

deceived and unworthily duped; it is he who muſt be ſet right. When you have this recantation in writing and in due form, I adviſe you to ſend it to him by a ſpecial meſſenger, with orders to deliver it into his own hands.

LETTER LIII.

The COUNTESS DE BEL ***'s *Anſwer.*

Lyons, September 25.

I HOPE that my excellent friend will be ſatisfied with my conduct. Every thing is done, every thing is terminated. On Thurſday poor Madame du Reſnel received the ſacrament, and the extreme unction; and this morning, in the preſence of witneſſes, ſhe dictated (for ſhe is unable to write) the *recantation* addreſſed to the Marquis d'Erneville, of which I ſend you a copy.

a copy. This ſolemn letter will be diſpatched to-morrow by a ſpecial meſſenger.

How much I admire the ſentiments and the greatneſs of ſoul that are diſplayed in your letter, and how much I am affected by the warm intereſt which you have ſhewn for me on this occaſion! I have already gathered the fruit of your uſeful advice; the Lady Abbeſs and my aunt are delighted with my conduct; and the *converſion* of Madame du Reſnel does me the greateſt honour. The grand Prior has paid me a viſit, and has loaded me with praiſes on this ſubject. I ſhall certainly procure *a leave of abſence* this ſpring; you well know why I wiſh it.

I have taken up my reſidence at Lyons; and I ſhall remain there as long as Madame du Reſnel lives, which, according to every appearance, will be but a ſhort time! This unfortunate creature affords me a frightful ſpectacle! You have no idea of her terrors.....This occaſions me to make

melancholy reflections. It must be admitted that there is no peaceful and gentle death but for *persevering believers* ..... Adieu, my very amiable Chevalier; I have such gloomy ideas that your presence alone can dissipate them.

Same day, eleven o'clock at night.

I open my letter to tell you that my poor friend has just drawn her last breath! ..... Oh! may heaven preserve us from so deplorable an end!

LETTER LIV.

Dictated by MADAME DU RESNEL *on her death-bed, and addreſſed to the* MARQUIS D'ERNEVILLE.

SIR, Lyons, September 25.

THE advice of a wiſe director and my own conſcience urge me to make to you a painful but neceſſary confeſſion.

The foundling brought up under your roof, by the name of *Léocadie*, is not my daughter, and I am entirely ignorant who are the authors of her days. I confeſs, with repentance, that motives of perſonal intereſt induced me to declare myſelf falſely the mother of this child.

Not being able to write, but having the full enjoyment of all my ſenſes, I dic-

tate aloud this letter to Monſieur Vilmain, notary royal, in the preſence of five reſpectable witneſſes.

Lyons, September 25.

We, the underſigned, certify as true the preſent declaration.

Jacques Vilmain, Notary royal.
*Ovide M*****, Count de Lyons.
Onéſime, Baron de ***.
Etienne Maurer, Sheriff.
Alexis de l'Orme.
Onuphre Balthazar, Chaplain to the noble chapter of Alix.

LETTER LV.

From the MARCHIONESS D'ERNEVILLE *to the* BARONESS DE VORDAC.

Erneville, September 29.

You will to-morrow, my dear friend, learn from Monſieur du Reſnel all the particulars of an event which will afflict you; but which has not occaſioned ſo much ſurpriſe as you might imagine.

Yeſterday, after dinner, Albert and Monſieur du Reſnel were playing at cheſs, and I was embroidering beſide them, when a ſervant came in to tell us that a courier, arrived from Lyons, deſired to ſpeak to Monſieur d'Erneville. At theſe words Monſieur du Reſnel turned pale; I became confuſed, I immediately foreboded the truth!..... Albert caſt a haſty glance

glance at Monſieur du Reſnel and me, with that penetrating eye which you know his to be; and I fell a trembling to ſuch a degree, that being no longer able to direct my needle, I laid down my work.....

In the mean time the courier appeared, advanced, and preſented a letter to Albert, who received it, at the ſame time deſiring him to go and wait for an anſwer. The man went away; and we all three remained by ourſelves, keeping a profound ſilence. Albert opened the letter, and I ſaw his face entirely altered. At that moment the courier re-entered, and delivered a packet to Monſieur du Reſnel, having had juſt learned from our ſervants that he was with us. The courier then returned to the antichamber. Albert, after having finiſhed the reading of his letter, got up, and throwing the letter on the table: "Read!" ſaid he to us, and without waiting for a reply, he abruptly left the room.

"Ah!

"Ah! Madam," then ſaid Monſieur du Reſnel to me, "I am the moſt unfor-
"tunate of men..... The innocence,
"the purity of my intentions cannot ex-
"cuſe the imprudence of my zeal.....
"Madame du Reſnel is no more, and ſhe
"has ſolemnly declared, on her death-
"bed, that ſhe is not the mother of Léo-
"cadie..... But," continued he, "al-
"low me to leave you; I am determin-
"ed to look for the Marquis, and explain
"myſelf with him frankly."

You may judge, my dear friend, that, during this explanation, I was not free from uneaſineſs! However, it paſſed pretty quietly. Monſieur du Reſnel diſplayed the ſtricteſt integrity. He ſent to Gilly for the Viſcount de St. Méran's letters relative to this buſineſs, and he ſhewed them all to us. We there ſaw what he had concealed from us, and what he ought not to have done; it is, that he gave his wife a thouſand louis in order to obtain from

her the confeſſion which he wiſhed for.... With a woman of that character this was acting on ſure grounds..... Nevertheleſs, we ſaw alſo by the Viſcount's letters that this woman, who was as artful as ſhe was vile, maintained this fiction by lies which rendered it ſo probable that the Viſcount himſelf was completely duped by them. In ſhort, Monſieur du Reſnel might deny that he gave her any money; the declaration does not expreſs it, at leaſt formally, and it was a fact impoſſible to be proved; ſo his frankneſs in this reſpect is certainly very meritorious. But Albert will never forgive him for having run the riſk of deceiving him, in order to oblige and ſerve me.

Poor Monſieur du Reſnel! His tender friendſhip for me has made him do an inconſiderate action, which cannot but be prejudicial to me; yet I ſee in it an affection ſo engaging and ſo true, that it can only increaſe the attachment which I already had for him.

In

In ſhort, my friend, here am I more *ſuſpected* than ever in the eyes of Albert! I have enjoyed the happineſs of a juſtification which appeared to me complete, only to be more fully ſenſible of the dreadful humiliation of ſuſpicions the moſt diſgraceful!..... Alas! for theſe three weeks I have had a preſentiment of this ſtrange revolution! I was but too well prepared for it by Madame du Reſnel refuſing to anſwer all Albert's queſtions. Two things, in particular, afflict me cruelly; the concern that this news will occaſion my mother, and Albert's coolneſs towards Monſieur du Reſnel.

I feel alſo very ſenſibly to what a degree this incident, in every point of view, is unlucky for Albert. He had confided to his brother, to your huſband, and perhaps to others too, the pretended ſecret of Léocadie's birth; he muſt now go and declare to theſe very perſons that all this was nothing but a fable!.... He has already told

told me that the *credulity*, which he had manifeſted on that occaſion, had covered him with indelible ridicule!..... And what a triumph for the Chevalier de Celtas and his friends!.....

However, Albert's generoſity ſuffers no change; I ſhould be conſoled by his behaviour and by his converſation, if I knew him leſs!.....

Ah! my dear friend, henceforth I expect no more domeſtic happineſs but from my children!.... Maurice, Léocadie, and Sylveſtre can alone make me amends for ſo many ſorrows ſo bitter and ſo little deſerved!.....

Adieu, my dear friend; when ſhall I ſee you?

LETTER LVI.

The BARONESS's *Anſwer:*

September 29.

TO-MORROW, my dear friend, I ſhall be at Erneville, and I ſhall paſs a week with you. Monſieur du Reſnel ſlept here; he related every thing to the Baron, who is as much *your friend as ever.* He alſo wiſhes to pay you a viſit; we ſhall ſet out together.

Unfortunate Monſieur du Reſnel! What a friend you have in him!....Do you know, my dear, where he is at this time? on the road to Lyons. He is determined to find out who are the perſons that governed Madame du Reſnel; he is determined to unmaſk the miſchief-makers.

Adieu; Simon wiſhes to ſet off; but we will chat to-morrow with open hearts.

LETTER LVII.

From MONSIEUR DU RESNEL *to the* BARON DE VORDAC.

Lyons, October 15.

As I announced to you, my dear Baron, I have made the moſt exact inquiries concerning the laſt procedure of Madame du Reſnel, and this is what I have learned with certainty:

For the laſt eighteen months, or two years, Madame du Reſnel had, for her lover, Monſieur de Bel***, a relation and friend of the *Chevalier de Celtas*. The latter, when he learnt that Madame du Reſnel pretended that ſhe was the mother of Léocadie, went to Lyons, paſſed ſeveral weeks at the chapter of Alix, and there

there declared himſelf paſſionately in love with Madame de Bel***, the ſiſter of Monſieur de Bel***, and the friend of Madame du Reſnel. This young canoneſs, whoſe diſpoſition is ſaid to be as free and eaſy as her manners, ſeduced by the Chevalier's flattery, conceived for him *a great fancy*, which ſhe took a pride in proclaiming. She it was that provided a confeſſor for Madame du Reſnel; ſhe it was that *adviſed* the recantation to be written in the preſence of five witneſſes, who are all *at leaſt* her friends; ſhe it was that determined that this recantation ſhould be addreſſed to the Marquis d'Erneville; and ſhe it was that ſent the courier, who is one of her own ſervants.

Here is great zeal! And eſpecially in a perſon the confidant of the intrigues between her brother and Madame du Reſnel. In ſhort, Madame de Bel*** ſays aloud that, in all this, ſhe followed the advice of the Chevalier de Celtas.

Now,

Now, my dear Baron, reflect and judge! Is it through love for religion that the *deiſt*, that the *philoſopher* Celtas has manifeſted ſo much zeal for the converſion of Madame du Reſnel? With reſpect to the recantation, would it not have been ſufficient had it been addreſſed to me by the confeſſor? Why all this ado? All this publicity?.... Know, then, the profound malice of this envious man, and implacable enemy of the Marchioneſs d'Erneville!

Friendſhip induced me to take an improper ſtep; ſeduced by deceitful appearances, I too lightly adopted a ſuppoſition which ſecured the peace of my friends. Miſtruſting Madame du Reſnel's veracity, I thought I was only doing away evaſions by offering her the ſum which ſhe received. We muſt never deviate from principles. I was therefore to blame, and I admit it. But hatred and reſentment will never make

make me do an equivocal thing. Thus, far from exaggerating in all that I tell you of the Chevalier de Celtas, I ſuppreſs many aggravating circumſtances, the recital of which would lead me into too long details. Your old and reſpectable friend, Monſieur d'Op***, writes to you on this ſubject, and will confirm to you the exact truth of all the anecdotes relative to the Chevalier de Celtas. I hope that, at laſt, your opinion of a man ſo dark and ſo dangerous, will be irrevocably fixed. As for me, I am fully determined to ſhew him, on every occaſion, the contempt with which he inſpires me, and conſequently never to admit him into my houſe.

Adieu, my dear Baron; I ſhall ſet out in a few days for Gilly, and I ſhall have great pleaſure in again taking you by the hand.

LETTER LVIII.

The BARON's *Anſwer.*

October 23.

THE malice is evident, and I ſhall ſay like *Orgon* in the *Tartuffe:*

"Voilà, je vous l'avoue, un abominable homme !"*

In every reſpect the human ſpecies is a fooliſh or a villainous race: knaves or dupes, hypocrites or fools, ſcoundrels or victims; there's its whole compoſition!

D'Orgeval and his wife called to ſee me, and I ſhewed them Monſieur d'Op***'s letter, which contains every

* This is an abominable fellow, I muſt confeſs. *Molière.*

thing

thing that you tell me concerning Celtas, and ſome farther details. D'Orgeval is ſo ſlender-witted and ſo bewitched with the Chevalier, that this letter did not make on him the ſmalleſt impreſſion. But the Chevalier's intrigue with the canoneſs greatly diſconcerted little Madame d'Orgeval; and, indeed, far from defending the Chevalier with her accuſtomed warmth, ſhe flatly blamed his conduct.

For me, I was much tempted to ſee this man no more; but the Baroneſs is againſt any thing that might occaſion a clamour; and ſhe begs of you, as a favour, not to relate this hiſtory to the Marquis and to Pauline. The Chevalier ſeldom calls on them at preſent; I ſhall no longer encourage his viſits; we know him, that is ſufficient. Let us avoid altercation; this is always the moſt prudent conduct.

Adieu, my dear philoſopher; come back quickly to the place where you are ſo ſincerely wiſhed for.

LETTER LIX.

From MONSIEUR D'ORGEVAL *to the* CHEVALIER DE CELTAS.

January 15.

I HAVE built a charming ſledge in which I went yeſterday to Erneville. The little girl's new-year's gift had juſt been received. The *elegant caſtle* is become a *dull hole*.

My brother is penſive, and grows abſent like the *philoſopher*; Pauline does not open her lips; Mademoiſelle du Rocher is of an inſufferable *half and half* temper, ſince the love-ſick Remi ſurpriſed her with all her cataplaſms: in ſhort, I got very ſick of the place, and I find myſelf again with great pleaſure in my own habitation.

You no longer come into our neighbourhood, my dear Chevalier; I hope that we ſhall meet this ſpring. But, perhaps, I ſhall ſpend the carnival at Autun.

LETTER LX.

From the VISCOUNT DE ST. MÉRAN *to* MONSIEUR DU RESNEL.

May 18.

I AM juſt returned from a country-ſeat where I have ſpent a very agreeable week. There was not much company; but a ſelect and charming party, perfect liberty, and delightful evenings. We had no cards; but we chatted, we told ſtories, and we never went to bed till day-light.

I have travelled, and I never met with a real taſte for ſociety any where but in France. In other countries, people invite you to come and ſee them merely to ſhew you a fine houſe, or to give you a good dinner; company aſſemble only to

diſplay oſtentation, or to eat and drink; all the charm of theſe parties would be loſt, if a retrenchment were made of coffee, tea, and punch *. We are but too ſenſible that, in general, it is vanity alone that invites us; but, in France, it is taſte, it is benevolence that welcomes us; we think we are received by friendſhip.

In

* We perfectly agree with the authoreſs, that the *ſavoir-vivre* is no where ſo well underſtood as in France; we farther agree with her, that eating and drinking generally conſtitute no unimportant part of Engliſh ſociability; yet we cannot but lament the ill fortune of this French lady, who, in the elegant ſocieties which, from her rank in life, ſhe, doubtleſs, frequented in England, met with no other ſort of occaſional beverage than *punch*. We have, indeed, heard of the ſtomachs of many of our belles having been much diſordered by the economical ſubſtitution of *imperial* for lemonade, at one of our faſhionable routs; but that *punch* was ever introduced as a general article of refreſhment, in thoſe circles, was a diſcovery reſerved for Madame de Genlis. Perhaps, ſhe was led to ſuppoſe it to be a favourite liquor in this country, from ſeeing, in her way to St. Paul's, the motto of "*Pro Bono Publico*," which,

In private ſocieties, there is no frivolous pretext for ſhining through luxury; we give, without fuſs and without ceremony, our every day ſupper; and, in order to make the hours glide ſmoothly away, the ſole pleaſure of converſation is ſufficient. This is what I have not ſeen except in France, and particularly in Paris. The natural temperance of the French contributes much to that ſociability for which they are diſtinguiſhed; and we ſhould loſe this charm, ſo juſtly extolled, if we ever introduced among us the cuſtom of taking refreſhments and drinking tea at all hours of the day.

There

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which, for many years, graced the outſide of a punch-houſe on Ludgate-Hill. But be this as it may, the remark accords ſo ill with the ſweetneſs of our fair traveller's diſpoſition, that we are exceedingly apprehenſive that the punch, which ſhe ſipped in England, had, on her delicate organs, the unpleaſant effect of the before-mentioned *imperial*. —*Tranſlator's Note.*

There is no longer any intereſt and connexion in converſations inceſſantly interrupted by that *medley*, which transforms a drawing-room into a real *coffee-houſe*. How can people chat, while eating cakes, ſeeing ſervants coming in and going out every minute, and the miſtreſs of the houſe ſtuck up before a tea-urn, and condemned to the mere drudgery of pouring out hot water? How can attention but be taken off by that noiſe of cups and ſpoons, and that eternal buſtle about nothing?

At this moment, nothing is talked of but the Duke de Roſmond's ſiſter to whom the king has given the title of *Madame**, and who was preſented laſt week. Never did beauty make more noiſe than hers; it is ſaid that ſhe eclipſes all the belles at court. She is now called the Counteſs de Roſ-

* In France, no unmarried woman of quality went to court till the king previouſly conſented to addreſs her by the title of *Madame*; which he always did on the requeſt of her relations.

mond.

mond. It is aſſerted that ſhe is irrevocably decided never to marry; and that this is the reaſon why ſhe choſe to be preſented, in order to have an eſtabliſhment and to be able to mix with the world. People make ſtrange conjectures reſpecting her averſion to marriage. Her affection for her brother, in whoſe houſe ſhe has lived for theſe five years, and who, during that time, has been her guardian, the Duke's want of principle, the beauty, the graces of theſe two perſons, the indifference which the Counteſs has ſhewn for thoſe who have been in love with her, all theſe things induce the ſuppoſition that ſhe has for her brother a criminal paſſion. .... Yet the Duke's attachment to Camille, that young ward of old Dercy, ſeems to contradict theſe injurious reports. The Duke is wholly taken up with this girl, whom he has obliged to quit the theatre; but the enviers of Madame de Roſmond maintain that this ſubordinate

intrigue is nothing more than a diſguiſe concerted between the brother and ſiſter, for the purpoſe of concealing their real ſentiments. Be this as it may, I have the moſt lively curioſity to ſee this intereſting girl of whom there is ſaid ſo much good and ſo much ill; but ſhe is extremely ſhy; ſhe never goes to public places; ſhe makes very few viſits; ſhe will not by any means call on the princes, nor will ſhe be preſented to them; and it is ſaid that ſhe will go no more to court; it is therefore very difficult to meet her. But I am to blame to give way to this wiſh; for if it be gratified, I ſhall, perhaps, experience the fate of poor Poligni.

I am perſuaded that great attachments are almoſt always announced by forebodings. Montaigne, when ſpeaking of his friend La Boëtie, ſays: "*Before we knew one ano-*
"*ther perſonally, we embraced each other*
"*by our names.*" This expreſſion has always

always pleaſed me; reaſon may criticize it; but the heart conceives and approves it: ſo many things, the truth of which the ſoul feels, are inexplicable to the mind. This is the reaſon why people, endowed with great ſenſibility, appear ſo frequently full of prejudices to the eyes of perſons of a cold diſpoſition. They have a ſecret inſtinct in which the others are deficient. May not the Creator, who has given to ſo many animals a prophetic inſtinct, have alſo ſometimes given this precious faculty to privileged ſouls? It ſeems to me that we ought neither to adopt ideas of this kind as certain, nor reject them poſitively becauſe they appear inconceivable. And what mortal ever fathomed all the depths of the myſterious ſecrets of the heart and of Nature?

Adieu, my friend; talk to me of yourſelf, of your neighbours; and, above all, of the incomparable Pauline.

LETTER XLI.

From the MARCHIONESS D'ERNEVILLE *to the* BARONESS DE VORDAC.

Erneville, September 6.

No, my dear friend, although Léocadie is in her ſixth year, I have not yet ſaid a a ſingle word to her reſpecting her birth, and I have taken every neceſſary precaution that the waiting-women and the other ſervants might not commit any indiſcretion in this reſpect. Not only ſhe thinks herſelf my daughter, but Maurice, who is older than her by two years and a half, is in the ſame error. Children of that age have no curioſity but for trifles, and nothing is more eaſy than to conceal from them family ſecrets.

Léocadie

Léocadie is poſſeſſed of extraordinary ſenſibility and intelligence; but I wiſh to wait yet, I wiſh her to be enabled to feel perfectly all the intereſt of ſuch a confidence. I wiſh, in ſhort, to uſher it in with great ceremony, both that the ſtriking ſcene, which I am preparing for her, may be one of the principal epochs of her life, and that it may never be effaced from her memory.

Hitherto, I have given her but a very ſmall part of the *anonymous new-year's gifts*; I lock up the reſt with the trinkets found in the *cloſet*, which ſhe wore only the firſt year of her life, and which ſhe has never ſeen ſince. She therefore knows not one of theſe things, which I ſhall deliver to her in proper time and place. As for the new-year's gifts that ſhe receives, ſhe thinks that it is I who ſend for them from Paris; theſe preſents are confounded with thoſe which I really make her, and ſhe wears none of the trinkets ſent by her

mother, except the watch, *the fatal ſeal*, the pearl necklace, and a little gold chain.

Madame du Reſnel's recantation has, no doubt, reproduced a ſad change in my fate; yet I have great pleaſure in thinking that my Léocadie was not brought into the world by that woman, in every reſpect ſo vile and ſo contemptible. It is pleaſing to me to reſume the intereſt with which her unhappy mother had inſpired me, and to be able to repreſent her to myſelf in the moſt affecting light. In receiving theſe anonymous new-years' gifts I experience inexpreſſible ſenſations; I put myſelf in the place of my Léocadie at fifteen; and I feel all the emotion which ſhe certainly will have at that age, if heaven preſerve to her that unknown mother ſo intereſting to her from her maternal affection! How I love this child! How much underſtanding and how many good qualities ſhe promiſes to have! And what mildneſs, what ſimple ingenuouſneſs, what a memory,

memory, what a diſpoſition for every thing that ſhe is taught! I am determined not to neglect any of my talents in order to impart them all to her. She has a particular taſte for drawing, and ſhe beſtows on this ſtudy the greateſt application. She will have a charming voice; ſhe has a very juſt ear; I have written for her ſeveral *hiſtorical and moral* romances to very ſimple tunes, and ſhe ſings them delightfully. In ſhort, I will make of her too a good *little houſewife*; and I ſhall ſucceed in this, by playing with her at *Madame*, that favourite children's play, which I improved for Maurice and Léocadie*. I ſay nothing to you of my little Sylveſtre; all that can be ſaid of him as yet is, that he is very florid and healthy.

Adieu, my friend; Léocadie ſends you a baſket of figs which ſhe gathered her-

* For the benefit which may be derived from this game, ſee my *Nouvelle Méthode d'Enſtignement pour la première Enfance.*

ſelf

ſelf with the intention of preſenting them to you. The two peaches and the flowers are for Monſieur du Reſnel, and likewiſe from Léocadie, who I aſſure you intereſts herſelf very feelingly about her abſent friends.

LETTER LXII.

From the COUNTESS *to the* MARQUIS.

ALL my arrangements are made for receiving Stephen; therefore do not longer delay to ſend him to me. I expect him with inexpreſſible impatience. You know that my poor Françoiſe is dead; ſhe has left a little girl four years old; I ſhall take this child, and I ſhall bring her up too. I have compoſed a very probable ſtory

ſtory about Stephen: in ſhort, every thing is prepared, even the playthings which I intend for him. Adieu, dear Albert; tell me if you ſtill expect to come in the month of January.

LETTER LXIII.

From the VISCOUNT DE ST. MÉRAN *to* MONSIEUR DU RESNEL.

May 8.

I SEND you, my friend, Condillac's *Traité des Senſations*, a work very much cried up by the encyclopedian ſect, and, in my opinion, one of the worſt and moſt tireſome productions of the age. The ſtyle of it is cold and dry; the idea very common, and the object pernicious; for the author has no other than to lead his reader

reader to materialiſm. And this is the reaſon why our philoſophers ſo much admire this pamphlet.

I alſo ſend you a little poem full as bad in its way, and praiſed to exceſs by the ſame perſons; becauſe the author is one of thoſe under their wing. It is a hymn (in proſe) addreſſed to the ſun by the Abbé de Reyrac. Although the work is very ſhort, I defy you to have the courage to read it, off hand, to the end. It is a tiſſue of common-place, in which you will not meet with an image, not a ſingle new thought; as for the manner in which it is written, you will find in it only emphatical and rumbling phraſes, laborioufly and painfully conſtructed, without variety, and conſequently without real harmony, and preſenting nothing but compariſons and ſtale metaphors. And this is what our philoſophers give us for a maſter-piece!

What a ſtrange thing is this conſpiracy of the Encyclopediſts! They have decided

that *without cabal, there is no wit,* and that all the wit of the whole world lies in cabal. They are numerous, they are intriguing; certain means of ſucceſs! What will reſult from this? The decline of literature, the corruption of taſte and morals, &c. I have read, within theſe few days, a letter from *the philoſopher of Ferney,* who ſays that every thing announces *a revolution,* and foretells that our *poſterity will ſee rare work* *. Such is the ſweet hope of the chiefs of the ſect! ſuch is the beneficent object of their labours! Theſe prophecies are rather alarming for us, my friend, who are not eighty years old; we might very poſſibly find ourſelves in the beginning of the ſquabble among our turbulent poſterity †.

Nothing

* See *Les Lettres de Voltaire.*

† Without referring to Voltaire's letters, our readers may find a very remarkable prophecy of the revolution, which has actually taken place in France, in the writings of one of our own countrymen. The late-

Nothing new in **** Palace, except that Madame de *** retires. I have, on this ſubject, picked up an anecdote which is well worth your hearing.

One

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late Lord Cheſterfield, in a letter to his ſon, dated April 13th, O. S. 1752, ſpeaking of a diſpute then exiſting between the king and the parliament of Paris, writes thus: "I foreſee that, before the end of this "century, the trade of both King and Prieſt will not "be half ſo good a one as it has been. Du Clos, in "his reflections, hath obſerved, and very truly, *qu'il "y a un germe de raiſon qui commence à ſe développer "en France. A développement*," adds Lord Cheſterfield, "that muſt prove fatal to Regal and Papal pre-"tenſions."—Another prophecy to the ſame effect, but which even goes far beyond the former, is recorded in the poſthumous works of the late celebrated Madame Roland. It is to be found in a piece entitled "*Rêverie Politique*," written in the year 1776, long before her marriage, and which, though never intended for the preſs, has, with her other *Eſſays*, been recently publiſhed in Paris, by L. A. Champagneux. This aſtoniſhing woman, who was then only twenty-two years of age, begins by drawing a compariſon between the adminiſtrations of the great Colbert and M. Turgot, the miniſter of the day; and, after

One morning, in my preſence, the Count de ****, the man who, of all others, is ſuppoſed to be the beſt judge of propriety, ſaid to our Princeſs, on the occaſion of Madame de ***'s retiring, that ſhe ought to preſent her with her picture. "She never was my friend," replied the Princeſs.—"No matter," reſumed the Count; "it is a favour of "*etiquette*; it is a mark of kindneſs which "your highneſs ought to beſtow, on part-"ing from her."—"Well, I conſent," rejoined

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after alluding to the ſcarcity of proviſions, at that time prevailing in France, in theſe words: "*Mais* "*depuis que le beſoin a crié: j'ai faim! les armes ſont* "*levées d'un bout du royaume à l'autre, et le font pa-*"*roître comme une plaine hériſſée de bayonnettes*;" ſhe concludes with the following emphatical paſſage: "*Si le ſyſtême demeure, que les vivres reſtent chers ainſi* "*que les baux, et que le peuple continue à ſouffrir, il* "*arrivera, ou une violente criſe qui peut renverſer le* "*trône, et nous donner une autre forme de gouvernement,* "*ou une léthargie ſemblable à la mort. Qu'il eſt triſte de* "*prévoir un tel avenir!*"—Tranſlator's Note.

rejoined the Princeſs; "but how ſhall I "give her my picture?".....On this queſtion the Count, ſmiling in a jocoſe manner, ſaid: "your highneſs does not "mean to give it her in oil colours? "This picture," continued he, "muſt "be in miniature ſet round with dia-"monds*."

So then it was ſaid to the Princeſs, without mincing the matter, that the picture is nothing more than the cloak or the pretext of the requeſt. It was thought ridiculous that ſhe ſhould have an idea of offering her picture in oil colours, becauſe it cannot be ſet with diamonds. Do you know any thing more abſurd and more mean? I have collected many other anecdotes of the ſame kind.

When the Count had left the room, the Princeſs, who had neither expreſſed ſur-

* This anecdote is not fictitious; the authoreſs heard this dialogue, and wrote it down in her journal on the very day it happened.

priſe

priſe nor diſſatisfaction, ſaid to me, laughing: "I believe I might very well ſave "myſelf the trouble of ſitting for my pic-"ture, and that it would be ſufficient to "give the *ſetting*."

This Princeſs is mild and amiable, when ſhe can get the better of her timidity. She has an intimate friend who pleaſes me extremely. It is the Counteſs d'Olbreuſe. The Princeſs was brought up in the ſame convent with her, and Madame d'Olbreuſe's mother was her governeſs: this has produced, between the Princeſs and her, an intimacy which has ſubſiſted from their childhood. Madame d'Olbreuſe, whoſe firſt huſband was Monſieur de S****, has been married ſix or ſeven years to the Count d'Olbreuſe; and, fixed by a real attachment, ſhe is, ſince her marriage, become a moſt rational and intereſting woman.

No, my friend, I have not yet met with the dangerous Counteſs de Roſmond: She

She has a country-ſeat where ſhe paſſes eight months of the year; ſhe has been there a month, and will not return thence till towards the end of the autumn.

Adieu, my old and true friend: I have no hopes of being able to come into Burgundy this year; but I will certainly ſpend two or three months there next ſummer.

THE END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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